

# THE ETERNAL PLAN OF GOD FOR THE CHRISTIAN BELIEVER



## **Ephesians 1:3-14** **TEXT, EXPOSITION AND PRACTICAL** **HELPS**

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# THE ETERNAL PLAN OF GOD FOR THE CHRISTIAN BELIEVER, [Ephesians 1:3-23](#)

## A. The Blessings of God, [Ephesians 1:3-14](#)

**([Ephesians 1:3-14](#)) Introduction:** among all the great passages of Scripture, this is one of the greatest. Its importance can never be overstated. It deals with God's plan for the world, His eternal plan; it deals with the great blessings of God which He pours out upon those who trust His Son Jesus Christ as their Savior.

1. **God's blessings are heavenly blessings, not material (v.3).**
2. **God has chosen us to be holy and blameless (v.4).**
3. **God has adopted us as children (v.5-6).**
4. **God has redeemed us—forgiven our sins (v.7).**
5. **God has given us wisdom and understanding (v.8).**
6. **God has revealed the mystery of His will to us (v.9-10).**
7. **God has given us an inheritance, that is, made us the heritage of God (v.11-13).**
8. **God has sealed us with the Holy Spirit (v.14).**

## DEEPER STUDY # 1

**([John 4:22](#)) Israel— God's Plan— History— Jews:** why did Jesus Christ come to the Jewish nation and come to earth as a Jew? Very simply stated, the Jews were God's special people. They had been born by a special act of God. It all started long, long ago.

### **God had wanted four things.**

1. He wanted a people who would love Him supremely and give Him their first loyalty. (Cp. [Genesis 17:7](#); [Isaiah 43:10](#).)
2. He wanted a people who would witness to all other nations that He and He alone was the one true and living God. (Cp. [Genesis 12:3](#); [Genesis 22:18](#); [Acts 13:26, 47](#).)
3. He wanted a people through whom He could send the promised Seed, the Savior and Messiah, Jesus Christ, to all men everywhere. (Cp. [Genesis 3:15](#); [Genesis 17:7](#); [Genesis 22:18](#); [Galatians 3:16](#); [John 4:22](#).)
4. He wanted a people through whom He could send His written Word, the Holy Bible, and preserve it for all generations. ([Romans 9:4-5](#); [1 Peter 2:10-12](#).)

In searching the earth for such a people, God could find none (cp. [Romans 1:18-32](#)). God could do only one thing.

**He had to find one man and through him begin a new people, a new nation.**

1. **God found and chose Abraham and through him established the Jewish nation.** ([Genesis 12:1-5](#); [Genesis 13:14-17](#); [Genesis 15:1-7](#); [Genesis 17:1-8, 15-19](#); [Genesis 22:16-18](#); [Genesis 26:2-5, 24](#); [Genesis 28:13-15](#); [Genesis 31:13](#); [Genesis 35:9-](#)

**12.)** God chose one man and challenged him to worship God supremely. If that man would worship God supremely, then God would cause a special people to be born of his seed. That man was Abraham. Abraham was the first Jew (cp. [Genesis 12:1-4](#); [Galatians 3:16](#)).

In the Old Testament the Jews and their land (Palestine) were continually pointed to as the very special people and land of God.

**They were called.....**

1. God's special people ([Deut. 7:6](#)).
2. God's peculiar people ([Deut. 14:2](#); [Deut. 26:18](#)).
3. God's peculiar treasure ([Exodus 19:5](#); [Psalm 135:4](#)).
4. the Lord's portion ([Deut. 32:9](#)).
5. the Lord's land ([Leviticus 25:23](#); [Jeremiah 2:7](#); [Jeremiah 16:18](#); [Hosea 9:3](#)).
6. the holy land ([Zech. 2:12](#)). (See [Deeper Study # 2—Romans 4:1-25](#) for more discussion.)

However, the Jewish nation failed to obey God supremely. The whole plot of the Old Testament centers around God pleading and dealing with the Jews. Again and again He gave the nation the opportunity to obey Him. He dealt with them in mercy and in judgment, but at every turn they refused to heed His pleading.

**2. God chose the family of David.** (See below [Deeper Study # 3—John 1:49](#).) God had no choice but to make another move, so He chose one faithful family within the Jewish nation and gave to that family one great promise. The family was that of King David and the promise was that of the Messiah, God's great King, God's very own Son. God's Son was to come through the line of David and establish an eternal nation of people who would love God supremely. **However, the Jewish nation again failed God. They misinterpreted God's Word—the prophecies of His coming.**

- a. The Jews misinterpreted God's Word by saying the seed of Abraham included only the Jewish nation. In their minds, God had no children except the children of the Jewish nation. The Bible says explicitly that the seed of Abraham is Christ, and the special people of God are those individuals within all nations who worship God supremely ([Galatians 3:16](#)).
- b. The Jews misinterpreted God's Word by saying that the eternal kingdom promised to David was the Jewish nation and the Jewish nation only. They expected Israel to be established as an earthly nation forever, and all other nations to be subservient to Israel. But again, God's promise was not that narrow, nor was it that prejudiced. The Bible says there is not, and never has been, any respect of persons with God ([Deut. 10:17](#); [2 Chron. 19:7](#); [Job 34:19](#); [Acts 10:34](#); [Romans 2:11](#); [Galatians 2:6](#); [Ephes. 6:9](#); [Col. 3:25](#); [1 Peter 1:17](#)). God did say that Christ was to come from the Davidic line, but He also said that He was going to establish an *eternal nation* made up of people everywhere who would love God supremely ([Romans 2:28-29](#)).

By misinterpreting God's promises, the Jews failed to be the missionaries to the world that God had chosen them to be. They became ***earthly bound*** and ***materialistic minded***. They twisted the idea of the promised Messiah to fit their own schemes. They conceived of Him as One who was to establish an earthly kingdom for the Jewish nation alone.

**They failed to see that God was speaking.....**

1. of an eternal kingdom of righteousness.
2. of a kingdom that is of another dimension entirely—the dimension of the spiritual.
3. of a new heaven and a new earth that would give each person an eternal life beyond just one earthly generation.

**3. God had no choice but to make a third move.** This He did by sending His own Son into the world through the Jewish nation. God sent Him so that the world through Him might be saved ([John 3:16-19](#)). However, man rejected God's Son and crucified Him. This act—the killing of God's Son—was the final blow. When man slew the only Son of God, the whole world *was* involved.

Both Jew and Gentile were represented symbolically in the Jewish religionists and the Roman authorities. They both actually did the plotting, sentencing, and execution. If the world was ever to be saved, it was now perfectly clear that God had to make every move Himself.

This He did once-for-all. In His eternal purpose and plan for man's salvation, God took the sins of all men and laid them upon His Son while He was being slain upon the cross. He allowed His Son to bear the sins of the world ([1 Peter 2:24](#)). Then He took His Son and raised Him from the dead—never to die again. He did what man had always failed to do: in His Son's resurrection God began to build a lasting kingdom of righteousness, a new nation that is presently being made up of men from all earthly nations who desire and are willing to follow Jesus Christ supremely.

He is calling out and forming a new people who have genuinely been born again—spiritually. These new born people shall live eternally—beyond just one earthly generation. These people are identified as His church, as a body of people who genuinely believe and follow Him. They are destined to be the inhabitants of the new heavens and earth.

God, acting solely upon His own through the death and resurrection of His Son, has fulfilled His promises to both Abraham and David. All the people of the nations of the world now have the opportunity to become children of God, the special people of God.

**DEEPER STUDY # 2**

**(Romans 4:1-25) Abraham— Jews, the Seed— Justification— Righteousness— New Creation:** Abraham held a unique position in the Jewish nation, for he was the founder of

the nation. He was the man whom God had challenged to be a witness to the other nations of the world—a witness to the only living and true God.

God had appeared to Abraham and challenged him to leave his home, his friends, his employment, and his country. God made two great promises if Abraham would follow God unquestionably: Abraham would become the father of a new nation, and all nations of the earth would be blessed by his seed ([Genesis 12:1-5](#); [Genesis 13:14-17](#); [Genesis 15:1-7](#); [Genesis 17:1-8, 15-19](#); [Genesis 22:15-18](#); [Genesis 26:2-5, 24](#); [Genesis 28:13-15](#); [Genesis 35:9-12](#)). (See above [Deeper Study #1—John 4:22](#).)

Scripture says Abraham did as God requested. He went out not knowing where he went ([Hebrews 11:8](#)). He completely and unquestionably trusted God and took God at His word.

**Now note:** it was not Abraham's keeping of the law that pleased God. In fact, the law had not yet been given ([Galatians 3:17](#)). What pleased God and what caused God to justify Abraham was Abraham doing as God had said. Abraham simply *believed* the promise of God that God would give him a new life—in a new nation—with a new people. (See below [Deeper Study # 4—Galatians 3:8, 16](#)).

**Note several things.**

1. Abraham and his "seed" were the only ones to whom God gave the promises. This is emphatically stated ([Romans 4:13-25](#); [Galatians 3:6-16, 26, 29](#)).

2. Only a promise was given to Abraham ([Romans 4:13-21](#); [Galatians 3:14, 18-21, 29](#)). No other information whatsoever was given. God did not identify the country nor tell Abraham where he was to go. Neither did God tell Abraham when his wife (Sarah) would bear the seed (the male child) from whom the promised nation would be born. God made a simple promise, and all Abraham had to go on was that simple promise, that is, the sheer Word of God.

3. Only one condition was attached to the promise. Abraham had to believe God. No works whatsoever were involved.

4. Abraham did believe God ([Genesis 12:4-5](#); [Romans 4:3, 11-22](#); [Galatians 3:6](#); [Hebrews 11:8](#)).

5. Abraham was *counted righteous* because he believed God ([Romans 4:3-5, 9-13, 19-22](#); [Galatians 3:6](#); cp. [Genesis 15:6](#)). God did not count him righteous because of who he was or what he had done. He simply believed God. Therefore, God took his faith and *counted* his faith as righteousness.

6. The proof that Abraham really believed God was that he did what God had said. His faith *preceeded* his obedience. He believed God and then he obeyed God. If he had not believed God, he would not have left his home or his employment. He would not have left his familiar surroundings and meaningful relationships and personal

attachments. The fact that he did as God asked was evidence that he believed the promise of God.

7. The man who believes God is the man who receives the promises of God ([Romans 4:5-12](#), [16-17](#), [23-25](#); [Galatians 3:7-9](#), [14](#), [22](#), [26](#), [29](#)). Paul argues that neither heritage nor nationality, neither merit nor works, neither the law nor the rules of the law have anything to do with the promises of God ([Galatians 3:6-7](#)). The true children of Abraham are those who believe God—any person of any nation. In fact, God's promise that a nation would be born to Abraham and "his seed" was the promise of an eternal nation. This eternal nation is to be of another world, of another dimension of being: the spiritual dimension, a dimension just as real as the physical dimension. But it is to have one distinction: every citizen is to be a believer—one who has believed God and His Word.

This is exactly what this passage is saying: "**They who believe are the children of Abraham, the children of God's promise. They are to be blessed along with faithful Abraham. They are to be the citizens of God's Kingdom, of 'the new heavens and the new earth.'**" (Cp. [Hebrews 11:8-18](#); [2 Peter 3:10-14](#).)

### DEEPER STUDY # 3

([John 1:49](#)) **Jesus Christ, King of Israel**: Jesus was declared to be the Messianic King. God had given to David and his seed (the Messiah) the promise of eternal government ([2 Sam. 7:12](#); [Psalm 39:3](#); [Psalm 132:11](#)).

**Note how often Jesus was called the son of David.** (Cp. [Matthew 12:23](#); [Matthew 15:22](#); [Matthew 20:30-31](#); [Matthew 21:9](#), [15](#); [Acts 2:29-36](#); [Romans 1:3](#); [2 Tim. 2:8](#); [Rev. 22:16](#).) It was the common title and popular concept of the Messiah.

Generation after generation of Jews had ached and looked for the promised deliverer of Israel. The people expected Him to be a great general who would deliver and restore the nation to its greatness. In fact, they expected Him to make the nation the center of universal rule. He would, under God, conquer the world and center the glory and majesty of God Himself in Jerusalem; and from His throne, the throne of David, He would execute *the Messianic fire of judgment* upon the nations and peoples of the world.

### DEEPER STUDY # 4

([Galatians 3:8](#), [16](#)) **Abraham**: the Scripture...preached the gospel to Abraham ([Galatians 3:8](#)). What does this mean?

God had promised Abraham an earthly son and a great earthly nation. But behind God's promise lay something more than just an earthly, human fulfillment. Abraham's son, Isaac, was a type of the *real seed* that was to come, and the Jewish nation was a type of the *real nation* that was to be born. (See above [Deeper Study #1—Romans 4:1-25](#)).

Paul gives at least two proofs for this typology.

1. The word "seed" is singular, not plural ([Galatians 3:16](#)). God's promise does not point to a great crowd of people, but to one single person. That person is Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of the promise to Abraham. And the nation promised is the new nation of believers that God is creating to inherit the new heavens and earth.

2. The major events of Isaac's life parallel the life of Christ.

1. First, Isaac was miraculously born ([Genesis 15:2-3](#); [Genesis 18:11](#); cp. [Romans 4:18-22](#); [Hebrews 11:11](#)).
2. Second, Isaac was to be offered up as a sacrifice ([Genesis 22](#)). Abraham was willing to offer up Isaac, and God accepted his willingness and motive as an actual fact. The word of [Hebrews 11:17](#) tells us this: "by faith Abraham...[who] received the promise offered up his only begotten son."
3. Third, Isaac was delivered from death by a miracle of God ([Genesis 22:10-13](#)). Abraham knew that God was able to raise up Isaac from the dead, in order to fulfill His promise, if need be ([Hebrews 11:19](#)).

#### **Working Outline**

1. **God's blessings are heavenly blessings, not material (v.3).**
2. **God has chosen us to be holy and blameless (v.4).**
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4. **God has redeemed us—forgiven our sins (v.7).**
5. **God has given us wisdom and understanding (v.8).**
6. **God has revealed the mystery of His will to us (v.9-10).**
7. **God has given us an inheritance, that is, made us the heritage of God (v.11-13).**
8. **God has sealed us with the Holy Spirit (v.14).**

#### **1. ([Ephesians 1:3](#)) Blessings: God's blessings are spiritual and heavenly, not material blessings.**

Throughout history God has used two methods of blessings to deal with man. Before Christ, God dealt with man by blessing him with material blessings. He promised Abraham and Israel land and wealth and fame. (See above [Deeper Study #1—John 4:22](#); See above [Deeper Study #2—Romans 4:1-25](#). Cp. [Genesis 12:1f](#); [Genesis 13:14-17](#); [Genesis 15:1-7](#), [15-19](#); [Genesis 22:16-18](#); [Genesis 26:2-5](#), [24](#); [Genesis 28:13-15](#); [Genesis 31:13](#); [Genesis 35:9-12](#).) But Israel misused and hoarded the material blessings. Instead of sharing its blessings with other nations, Israel isolated itself and claimed superiority and God-given rights over other nations of the earth. However, since Christ, God deals with man spiritually, blessing him with spiritual blessings.

#### **Five things should be noted about this.**

1. Spiritual blessings *are of the Spirit*. It is the Spirit that controls man and the circumstances that surround him. A man may feel bad; he may be down, depressed and oppressed; but if his spirit is strong, he arises and conquers his feelings. He controls and



overcomes the oppressing circumstances, and he lives a victorious day. But if his spirit is weak, whether at work or at play, he often wallows around in self-pity, grumbling and griping and living a defeated day. And too often the days stretch into weeks and months until a person's life is down more than it is up—all because the spirit is too weak to conquer. Thus, the major blessings of God are bound to be blessings that are spiritual—that enable a person to control his life.

2. Spiritual blessings are the very opposite of temporal blessings. They are the ***blessings of the inner man***, the blessings of the immortal. But of all blessings, they are the most glorious and satisfying. They are the blessings that erase the loneliness, alienation, and purposelessness of man. They are the blessings that give man an overabundance of life.

3. Spiritual blessings are vastly superior to material blessings. They are ***permanent and perfect and eternal***, lasting forever. They are of the very same nature as God Himself. Spiritual blessings exist and can be experienced both upon earth (the physical dimension of being) and in heaven (the spiritual dimension of being).

4. Spiritual blessings are found only ***in Christ***. Jesus Christ has been raised from the dead and exalted to the right hand of God the Father. He is in heaven, surrounded by all the heavenly atmosphere and blessings. All heavenly blessings are His; He is Lord and Possessor of all blessings. Therefore, if a person is to experience the spiritual blessings, he must be ***in Christ***.

**If a person is in Christ, then he sits in heaven with Christ. How is this possible?**

When a person ***believes in Christ***, truly believes, God takes his faith and counts it as righteousness. God counts the person to be the same as Christ, righteous and acceptable. In God's mind ***faith in Christ*** makes a person just like Christ: holy and righteous and acceptable for heaven.

Therefore, when a person believes in Christ, God's mind sees the person in Christ; God sees the person identified with Christ, seated in heaven. And being seated in heaven, the person can experience all the blessings of heaven. Simply stated, to be ***in Christ*** means to believe in God's Son so much that God becomes elated—elated so much that He counts the person to be just like Christ: acceptable and worthy to be blessed with all the blessings of heaven. (See below [Deeper Study # 5—Justification—Galatians 2:15-16](#) for more discussion.)

5. God dealt with man in material blessings first because man had to learn several things.

- a. An earthly inheritance does not last. It is subject to being lost or stolen. We either watch our material possessions deteriorate or else we leave our material possessions behind for others.
- b. An earthly nation and material inheritance cannot bring peace and security. Peace and security are of the spirit. Earthly nations and material things are of



the earth, of a corruptible nature. Thus nations and material things do not solve the spiritual struggle that man senses within his own being. Neither can nations and material things erase the spiritual divisions between men and between man and God.

- c. Man has within his **inner being** a basic selfishness and greed. Man finds a tendency, an unregulated urge, that desires and seeks the material and hoards the corruptible to the neglect of the spiritual.
- d. Man must undergo a basic change of character to be freed of this urge, this tendency that causes so much bondage, disruption, and division within one's self and between men. Man must be **born again**, made into a **new creation**, created into a **new man**—spiritually, permanently, perfectly, eternally. And such a spiritual creation must be performed by someone much greater than himself. Man must be recreated by the hand of God Himself.

### DEEPER STUDY # 5

([Galatians 2:15-16](#)) **Justification**: (*diakioun*): “to count someone righteous”. It means “to reckon, to credit, to account, to judge, to treat, to look upon as righteous”. It does not mean to make a man righteous. All Greek verbs which end in “*oun*” mean not to make someone something, **but merely “to count, to judge, to treat someone as something”**.

**There are three major points to note about justification.**

- 1. Why justification is necessary.
  - a. Justification is necessary because of the sin and alienation of man. Man has rebelled against God and taken his life into his own hands.

**Man lives as he desires.....**

- 1. fulfilling the lust of the eyes and of the flesh.
- 2. clinging to the pride of life and to the things of the world.

Man has become sinful and ungodly, an enemy of God, pushing God out of his life and wanting little if anything to do with God. Man has separated and alienated himself from God.

- b. Justification is necessary because of the anger and wrath of God. “**God is angry with the wicked every day**” ([Psalm 7:11](#)). Sin has aroused God's anger and wrath.

**God is angry over man's.....**

- |              |                    |
|--------------|--------------------|
| 1. rebellion | 4. ungodliness     |
| 2. hostility | 5. unrighteousness |
| 3. sin       | 6. desertion       |

Man has turned his back upon God, pushing God away and having little to do with Him. Man has not made God the center of his life; man has broken his relationship with God. Therefore, the greatest need in man's life is to discover

the answer to the question: How can the relationship between man and God be restored?

2. Why God justifies a man. God justifies a man because of His Son Jesus Christ. When a man believes in Jesus Christ, God takes that man's faith and counts it as righteousness. The man is not righteous, but God considers and credits the man's faith as righteousness.

**Why is God willing to do this?**

- a. God is willing to justify man because He loves man that much. God loves man so much that He sent His Son into the world and sacrificed Him in order to justify man ([John 3:16](#); [Romans 5:8](#)).
- b. God is willing to justify man because of what His Son Jesus Christ has done for man.
  1. Jesus Christ has secured the ***Ideal*** righteousness for man. He came to earth to live a sinless and perfect life. As Man He never broke the law of God; He never went contrary to the will of God, not even once. Therefore, He stood before God and before the world as the Ideal Man, the Perfect Man, the Representative Man, the Perfect Righteousness that could stand for the righteousness of every man.
  2. Jesus Christ came into the world to ***die*** for man. As the ***Ideal Man*** He could take all the sins of the world upon Himself and die for every man. His death ***could stand*** for every man. He exchanged places with man by becoming the sinner ([2 Cor. 5:19](#)). He bore the wrath of God against sin, bearing the condemnation for every man. Again, He was able to do this because He was the Ideal Man, and as the ***Ideal Man*** His death could stand for the death of every man.
  3. Jesus Christ came into the world to ***arise from the dead*** and thereby to conquer death for man. As the ***Ideal Man*** His resurrection and exaltation into the presence of God ***could stand*** for every man's desperate need to conquer death and to be acceptable to God. His resurrected life could stand for the resurrected life of the believer.

Now, as stated above, when a man believes in Jesus Christ—really believes—**God takes that man's belief and.....**

1. counts it as the righteousness (perfection) of Christ. The man is counted as ***righteous in Christ***.
2. counts it as the death of Christ. The man is counted as having already ***died in Christ***, as having already paid the penalty for sin ***in the death of Christ***.
3. counts it as the resurrection of Christ. The man is counted as already having been ***resurrected in Christ***.

Very simply, God loves His Son Jesus Christ so much that He honors any man who honors His Son by **believing on Him**. He honors the man by taking the man's faith and counting (crediting) it as righteousness and by giving him the glorious privilege of living with Christ forever in the presence of God.

**3. How God justifies a man**. The word justify (*diakioun*) is a legal word taken from the courts. It pictures man on trial before God. Man is seen as having committed the most heinous of crimes; he has rebelled against God and broken his relationship with God. How can he restore that relationship? Within human courts if a man is acquitted, he is declared innocent, but this is not true within the Divine Court. When a man appears before God, he is anything but innocent; he is utterly guilty and condemned accordingly.

But when a man sincerely trusts Christ, then God takes that man's faith and counts it as righteousness. By such God counts the man—judges him, treats him—as if he was innocent. The man is not made innocent; he is guilty. He knows it and God knows it, but God treats him as innocent. **"God justifies the ungodly"**—an incredible mercy, a wondrous grace.

**How do we know this? How can we know for sure that God is like this?** Because Jesus said so. He said that God loves us. We are sinners, yes; but Christ said that we are very, very dear to God.

**"And he [Abraham] believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness" ([Genesis 15:6](#)).**

**"And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses" ([Acts 13:39](#)).**

**"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" ([Romans 3:23-24](#)).**

**"For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness" ([Romans 4:3](#)).**

**"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" ([Romans 5:1](#)).**

**"Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him" ([Romans 5:9](#)).**

**"For he that is dead [counted dead, justified] is freed from sin" ([Romans 6:7](#)).**

**"Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth" ([Romans 8:33](#)).**

**"And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God" ([1 Cor. 6:11](#)).**

**"Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works**

of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified" ([Galatians 2:16](#)).

"Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness" ([Galatians 3:6](#)).

"Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith" ([Galatians 3:24](#)).

"And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith" ([Phil. 3:9](#)).

## **2. ([Ephesians 1:4](#)) Holy— Blameless: the first blessing—God has chosen us to be holy and blameless.**

This is a wonderful verse. Just imagine! **God determined before the world was ever created that He would have a people.....**

1. who would be "in Him," that is, in His Son, Jesus Christ.
2. who would be "holy and without blame."
3. who would live "before Him in love"—forever and ever.

This means a most wonderful thing; God wants us to be with Him. God does not want us separated from Him, gripped by sin and shame, sorrow and pain, death and hell. God wants us to live forever and ever with Him.

In fact, note that God has determined that some will live with Him and Christ. He has "**chosen us**"—chosen believers—to live with Him. No amount of rebellion and rejection, cursing and denial of Him will stop His purpose and plan. God will have a people who will live with Him, and He will continue to choose us until He has the number He has purposed.

**Now, note the great blessing of God:** that we should be holy and without blame before Him.

1. The word "holy" (*hagious*) means "to be set apart and consecrated to God". It is the same word that is used for "saint" in [Ephes. 1:1](#) (see below [Deeper Study # 6, Saint—Ephes. 1:1-2](#) for discussion).

"Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" ([2 Cor. 7:1](#)).

"And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" ([Ephes. 4:24](#)).

"Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord" ([Hebrews 12:14](#)).

"But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation [behavior]; because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy" ([1 Peter 1:15-16](#)).

"Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation [behavior] and godliness" ([2 Peter 3:11](#)).

2. The word "blameless" (*amōmous*) means "to be free from sin, dirt, and filth; to be above reproach and without blemish; to be without fault and defilement".

"That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world" ([Phil. 2:15](#)).

"And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight" ([Col. 1:21-22](#)).

"To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints" ([1 Thes. 3:13](#)).

"And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" ([1 Thes. 5:23](#)).

"Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless" ([2 Peter 3:14](#)).

Simply stated, the great blessing of God is perfection; God has chosen the believer to be perfect. **But note:** the believer's perfection is *in Christ and in Christ alone*. No man—not even a believer—can live a perfect and sinless life. No man is righteous or ever will be. Jesus Christ is the only Person who has ever lived a sinless and perfect life; therefore, He is the only Person who has the right to live with God. Our only hope of ever living with God is to *believe in Jesus Christ*—believe so much that God will take our faith and count it as the righteousness of Christ.

**This is the glorious gospel:** God loves us so much that He has accepted us in the righteousness of Jesus Christ. He has taken our *faith in Christ* and counted it as the righteousness of Christ. Therefore, we are acceptable to God because we trust in Christ and in His righteousness—accepted as being perfect in the perfection of Jesus Christ.

### DEEPER STUDY # 6

([Ephesians 1:1-2](#)) **Church—Believers, Call—Saints—Faithful:** there was God's call to the church. This is Paul's greeting to the church, and it is very similar to the usual greeting he gave to all churches. Note the depth of meaning in what he says: he is actually covering the scope of God's call to a church and its believers.

1. God calls believers to be *saints and faithful*.

a. In the Bible the word "saint" does not refer to just a few people who have done great works for God. It refers to all people. The word "saint" (*hagiois*) means

**“to be set apart, consecrated, sacred, and holy”.** A saint is a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ who has been set apart to live for God. The saint has given himself to live a consecrated, sacred, and holy life—all for the glory of God.

Note that believers are *saints* in both senses:

1. Believers are *saints* in the sense that they have been given a new heart by God: a heart that is renewed and recreated in righteousness and true holiness.

**"And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" ([Ephes. 4:24](#)).**

**"And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him" ([Col. 3:10](#)).**

**"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" ([2 Cor. 5:17](#)).**

2. Believers are *saints* in the sense that they are set apart to live consecrated and holy lives in this world.

**"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" ([Romans 12:1-2](#)).**

**"As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: but as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation [behavior]" ([1 Peter 1:14-15](#)).**

- b. The word "faithful" (*pistoi*) means **“a person who has placed his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ”.** The faithful person is a person who has looked upon the Lord Jesus Christ and.....

1. believed that Christ could and would save him.
2. counted Christ worthy of his trust.
3. placed his confidence in Christ and His Word.
4. entrusted his salvation into the hands of Christ.
5. committed his life to Christ.

Very simply, the faithful are those who have surrendered and set their lives apart to Jesus Christ, trusting Him to save them. **This is the very first call God gives to people:** to be the saints and the faithful of the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Thought 1.** Every human being should make absolutely sure that God counts him among the saints and the faithful of the world. Unless he is so counted, there is no escape from the enslavements and corruptions of this world; and most tragic of all, his end is death, eternal death.

"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" ([John 3:14-15](#)).

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" ([John 3:16](#)).

"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" ([John 3:36](#)).

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life" ([John 5:24](#)).

"Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live" ([John 11:25](#)).

"I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness" ([John 12:46](#)).

"But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name" ([John 20:31](#)).

"That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved" ([Romans 10:9](#)).

### **3. (Ephesians 1:5-6) Adoption—Predestination—Foreordained: the second blessing—God has adopted us as children.**

How unbelievable—what a glorious privilege to be adopted as a child of God!

#### **And note:**

- a. It was predestinated, that is, "**foreordained**" (*proorisas*).
- b. It was the pleasure of God to adopt us—the good pleasure of His will. And it was His purpose to adopt us, and His purpose and His pleasure and His will were all good.

This is most striking when we consider how sinful and depraved we are and how much we have cursed, rebelled, and rejected God. The fact that God wills and finds pleasure in adopting us and that He counts it as good is too much to believe. Yet, it is exactly what He says.



Now note **two significant things**.

1. The word "**foreordained**" **does not mean** that God chooses some persons for salvation and everyone else for eternal punishment. Scripture teaches the exact opposite.

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" ([John 3:16](#)).

"For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" ([Romans 10:13](#)).

"For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" ([1 Tim. 2:3-4](#)).

"For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time" ([1 Tim. 2:5-6](#)).

"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" ([2 Peter 3:9](#)).

"And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world" ([1 John 2:2](#)).

The word "predestination" (*proorisas*) means "to destine or appoint before, to foreordain, to predetermine". The basic Greek word (*proorizo*) means "to mark off or to set off the boundaries of something". The idea is a glorious picture of what God is doing for the believer. The boundary is marked and set off for the believer: the boundary of being adopted as a child of God. The believer shall be adopted, made just like Christ and conformed to His very likeness and image. Nothing can stop God's purpose for the believer. It is predestinated, set and marked off.

The believer may struggle and suffer through the sin and shame of this world; he may even stumble and fall or become discouraged and down-hearted. But if he is a genuine child of God, he will not be defeated, not totally. He will soon arise from his fall and begin to follow Christ again. He is predestinated to be a brother of Christ, to worship and serve Christ throughout all eternity. And Christ will not be disappointed. God loves His Son too much to allow Him to be disappointed by losing a single brother.

Jesus Christ will have His joy fulfilled; He will see every brother of His adopted and conformed perfectly to His image. He will have the worship and service of every person chosen to be His by God the Father. The believer's eternal destiny, that of being an adopted brother to the Lord Jesus Christ, is determined. The believer can rest assured of this glorious truth. God has predestinated him to be delivered from the suffering and struggling of this sinful world.

"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" ([Ephes. 1:4-5](#)).

"According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord: in whom [Christ] we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him" ([Ephes. 3:11-12](#)).

2. The word "adoption" means to "*place as a son*" (see below [Deeper Study # 7, Adoption—Galatians 4:5-6](#) for discussion).

3. Adoption is by Jesus Christ and by Him alone. God accepts us because we believe and trust His Son Jesus Christ. He tells us plainly that He wants His Son to have many brothers and sisters who will love, worship, and serve Him both now and forever. Therefore, when a person wants to live for Jesus Christ—wants to live for Him so much that he *entrusts all he is and has to Christ*—God takes that person's trust and adopts him, makes him a brother or sister to Jesus Christ.

"For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified" ([Romans 8:28](#))

4. God's purpose in adoption is that we might live forever—live to the praise of the glory of His grace.

"That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus" ([Ephes. 2:7](#); cp. [Ephes. 1:18](#)).

## DEEPER STUDY # 7

([Galatians 4:5-6](#)) **Adoption**: the word "adoption" (*huiiothesia*) means to "*place as a son*". The picture of adoption is a beautiful picture of what God does for the Christian. In the ancient world the family was based on a Roman law called "**patria potestas**," the **father's power**. The law gave the father absolute authority over his children so long as the father lived. He could work, enslave, sell, and if he wished, he could pronounce the death penalty. Regardless of the child's adult age, the father held all power over personal and property rights.

Therefore, adoption was a serious matter. Yet, it was a common practice to ensure that a family would not become extinct by having no male children. **And when a child was adopted, three legal steps were taken.**

1. The adopted son was adopted permanently. He could not be adopted today and disinherited tomorrow. He became a son of the father—forever. He was eternally secure as a son.

2. The adopted son immediately had all the rights of a legitimate son in the new family.

3. The adopted son completely lost all rights in his old family. The adopted son was looked upon as a new person—so new that old debts and obligations connected with his former family were cancelled out and abolished as if they never existed.

**The Bible says seven things about the believer's adoption as a son of God.**

1. The believer's adoption establishes a new relationship with God—forever. He is eternally secure as a child of God. But the new relationship is established only when a person comes to Christ through faith ([Galatians 3:26](#); [Galatians 4:4-5](#)).

2. The believer's adoption establishes a new relationship with God as father. The believer has all the rights and privileges of a genuine son of God ([Romans 8:16-17](#); [1 John 3:1-2](#)).

3. The believer's adoption establishes a new dynamic experience with God as father, a moment by moment access into His very presence ([Romans 8:14, 16](#); [Galatians 4:6](#)).

4. The believer's adoption gives him a very special relationship with other children of God—a family relationship that binds him with others in an unparalleled spiritual union.

5. The believer's adoption makes him a new person. The believer has been taken out from under the authority and power of the world and its sin. The believer is placed as a son into the family and authority of God. The old life with all of its debts and obligations are cancelled and wiped out ([2 Cor. 5:17](#); [Galatians 3:23-27](#); [2 Peter 1:4](#)).

6. The believer's adoption is to be fully realized in the future at the return of Jesus Christ ([Romans 8:19](#); [Ephes. 1:14](#); [1 Thes. 4:14-17](#); [1 John 3:2](#)).

7. The believer's adoption and its joy will be shared by all creation on a cosmic scale ([Romans 8:21](#)). There is to be a new heavens and earth ([2 Peter 3:12-14](#); [Rev. 21:1-7](#)).

**4. ([Ephesians 1:7](#)) Redemption— Ransom: the third blessing—God has redeemed us and forgiven our sins.**

The word "**redemption**" (*apolutrōsin*) is one of the great words of the Bible. It conveys the idea of deliverance or setting a man free by paying a ransom. For example, a prisoner of war or a kidnapped person is ransomed or redeemed; or a convicted criminal is freed from the penalty of death. In every case the man is powerless to free himself. He cannot pay the penalty demanded to liberate himself from his situation or bondage.

**Note several significant facts.**

1. Man has been captivated or kidnapped by several forces.

a. The force of sin. All men sin and cannot help but sin. Man is sold under sin. Sin has captivated him ([Romans 3:23](#); [Romans 7:14](#)).

b. The force of corruption and death. The whole creation is corrupt ([Romans 8:21](#)). Everything wastes away; it deteriorates, decays, ages, and eventually dies. Corruption and death have captivated man. (Cp. [1 Cor. 15:42, 50](#); [Galatians 6:8](#); [2 Peter 1:4](#); [2 Peter 2:12, 19](#).)

- c. The force of Satan. All unbelievers are under the power and influence of Satan. He has blinded their minds to the gospel ([2 Cor. 4:4](#)). He works in the children of disobedience ([Ephes. 2:2](#)). They are captivated by him ([1 John 5:19](#)).

**2. Three key ideas are included in the concept of redemption.**

- a. Man needs to be liberated, delivered, and set free.
- b. Man is unable to liberate himself. He has no energy, no power, no ability to free himself.
- c. God has redeemed man by the blood of His Son Jesus Christ. God Himself has paid the ransom for man's release—the ransom of a life for a life. God gave His own Son so that man might be set free. Man has been redeemed through the blood of Jesus Christ (cp. [Leviticus 17:11](#); [Matthew 20:28](#); [Romans 3:24](#); [1 Cor. 6:20](#); [1 Cor. 7:23](#); [Col. 1:14](#); [1 Tim. 2:5-6](#); [Hebrews 9:15](#); [1 Peter 1:18f](#); [2 Peter 2:1](#); [Rev. 5:9](#); [Rev. 14:3-4](#)). This is extremely important to note: when a man truly calls upon the Lord to save him, God buys him right out of the marketplace of this corruptible life ([Romans 10:13](#)). God redeems him once for all, purchases and removes him from further sale. He is redeemed eternally (cp. [Galatians 3:13](#); [Galatians 4:5](#); [Col. 4:5](#)).

3. God redeems man because of the riches of His grace (see below [Deeper Study # 8, Grace—Ephes. 2:8-9](#) for discussion). He loves man with an unbelievable love—a love so great that it spurs Him to do whatever is necessary to save man.

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

"Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" ([Matthew 20:28](#)).

"Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" ([Romans 3:24](#)).

"For ye are bought [redeemed] with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" ([1 Cor. 6:20](#)).

"Ye are bought [redeemed] with a price; be not ye the servants of men" ([1 Cor. 7:23](#)).

"In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace" ([Ephes. 1:7](#)).

"In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins" ([Col. 1:14](#)).

"For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time" ([1 Tim. 2:5-6](#)).

"And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance" ([Hebrews 9:15](#)).

"Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" ([1 Peter 1:18-19](#)).

"But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought [redeemed] them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction" ([2 Peter 2:1](#)).

"And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation" ([Rev. 5:9](#)).

"And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth. These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the first fruits unto God and to the Lamb" ([Rev. 14:3-4](#)).

#### DEEPER STUDY # 8

([Ephesians 2:8-9](#)) **Salvation— Grace— Faith:** you are saved by God and by God alone.

This is the major stress of this passage.

1. You are saved by God's grace. **Grace** means "the favor and kindness of God, but there is a uniqueness about God's favor and kindness". **His favor and kindness are given despite the fact that it is undeserved and unmerited.** God has done a thing unheard of among men:

**God has given His grace to men.....**

1. despite their cursing Him.
2. despite their rejecting Him.
3. despite their rebelling against Him.
4. despite their hostility toward Him.
5. despite their denial of Him.
6. despite their neglect of Him.
7. despite their half-hearted commitment to Him.
8. despite their worship of religion instead of Him.
9. despite their false worship.
10. despite their idolatrous worship.
11. despite their trespasses.
12. despite their sins.

Grace is giving, but it is giving to people who do not deserve the gift. **What is the gift that God has given?** Jesus Christ. God has given His Son, Jesus Christ, to save men.

He did not have to give His Son. God could have wiped man from the face of the earth. **Man deserved it, but this is God's grace.** God is full of mercy and love and kindness—by His very nature He is full of these glorious qualities. Therefore, God was bound to shower His grace upon man. God was bound to send His Son to save man.

God is not off someplace in the distance, far removed from man, disinterested and unconcerned with man's sufferings and death. God is gracious, full of mercy, love, and kindness for man; therefore, He has reached out through His Son Jesus Christ to help man.

### **How?**

By giving His Son to die *for man*. When Jesus Christ hung upon the cross, He was *taking our sins* upon Himself and bearing the punishment for our sins. We had committed high treason against God: rejected and rebelled against Him. The penalty for high treason is death; we are condemned to die. But Christ took our penalty and condemnation upon Himself. He died for us—in our place, in our stead, as our substitute. This is what Scripture means when it says that Christ died *for us*.

**"For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly" ([Romans 5:6](#)).**

**"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" ([Romans 5:8](#)).**

**"For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life" ([Romans 5:10](#)).**

**Note** that the people for whom Christ died did not deserve His sacrificial love.

**They were men who were.....**

1. "without strength" ([Romans 5:6](#)).
2. "ungodly" ([Romans 5:6](#)).
3. "sinners" ([Romans 5:8](#)).
4. "enemies" ([Romans 5:10](#)).

This is the grace of God—God's grace that showered itself upon sinful men who were lost and condemned—God's grace that gave the greatest gift possible to men—the gift of His Son to save the world.

**"Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" ([Romans 3:24](#)).**

**"For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich" ([2 Cor. 8:9](#)).**

**"In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace" ([Ephes. 1:7](#)).**

**"But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved)" ([Ephes. 2:4-5](#)).**

**2. You are saved through faith. What does it mean to be saved through faith?**

**Simply this:** Jesus Christ died *for us*. He bore our sin and punishment upon the cross. When we believe, really believe, that Jesus Christ died for us, God does a wonderful thing. God takes our faith and *counts* it as the death of Jesus Christ *for us*. That is, when we honor God's dear Son by believing in Him so much that we give all we are and have to Him, God takes the death of Jesus Christ and applies it to us.

**The point is this:** it is our faith that causes God to look upon us as having been in Christ when He died. It is our faith that causes God to credit us with salvation.

Jesus Christ is God's gift to us. Salvation through Christ has been wrapped up as a gift and God hands it over to us. But note: a gift is not ours until we believe it is ours and we take and receive it. Suppose I hand you my Bible and say, "Here, this is yours. I give it to you as a gift. It is yours; take it." What is necessary for the Bible (the gift) to become yours? You have to believe it is yours and reach out and receive it.

**You could say, "No thank you....."**

1. I do not believe you.
2. I don't want it.
3. I deny its existence.
4. I don't have the time to use it."

If this is your attitude, what happens to the gift? It never becomes yours. In my mind I gave it to you, but you never received it. You either did not believe it or did not want it.

**This is what is meant by faith.** If you believe, really believe that Jesus Christ died *for you*, you will reach out and receive the gift of God's grace.

**"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" ([John 3:16](#)).**

**"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life" ([John 5:24](#)).**

**"But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name" ([John 20:31](#)).**

**"That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" ([Romans 10:9-10](#)).**



3. You are not saved of yourselves. God is perfect, and to live in His presence, a person must be perfect. This is the great problem of man. Man is not perfect; therefore, he can never live in God's presence—not in and of himself. Even if man could be good enough and do enough good to become perfect (he cannot, but even if he could) he would not be acceptable to God. Why? Because he has already transgressed and become imperfect. He already stands imperfect, corruptible, aging, dying, and decaying. If man is ever to be acceptable to God—if he is ever to be perfected and have his past wiped clean—it will not be by his own hands. He cannot save himself. **Salvation is not of man.**

**"For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise" ([2 Cor. 10:12](#)).**

**"For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself" ([Galatians 6:3](#)).**

**"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost" ([Titus 3:5](#)).**

**"Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness: but a faithful man who can find?" ([Proverbs 20:6](#)).**

**"He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool: but whoso walketh wisely, he shall be delivered" ([Proverbs 28:26](#)).**

**"There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness" ([Proverbs 30:12](#)).**

**"The pride of thine heart hath deceived thee, thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, whose habitation is high; that saith in his heart, Who shall bring me down to the ground? Though thou exalt thyself as the eagle, and though thou set thy nest among the stars, thence will I bring thee down, saith the LORD" ([Obadiah 3-4](#)).**

4. You are saved as a gift of God, not of works. There are at **least seven reasons** why salvation must be a free gift. (Note: some of these were stirred by thoughts from William Barclay, *The Letters to the Galatians and Ephesians*, p.121f.)

1. Man cannot make God owe him. Man cannot put God in debt for work performed. A man who works puts his employer in debt for his services ([Romans 4:4](#)). God is completely independent. He cannot be put in debt to any man. God cannot be made to owe anything or to be obligated for anything. God does not save man because He is obligated to man or owes man, but because He loves and wills to save man.
2. Man cannot bring perfection to God. God is perfect, incorruptible, and permanent. Man and everything about man is imperfect, corruptible, and decaying. Man cannot offer and cannot give anything to God that will satisfy His perfection. Any offer or gift from an imperfect man to a perfect God is ever so short and inadequate. God accepts man's offer of himself not because man merits acceptance, but simply because God loves and wills to accept man.

3. Man cannot make God forgive him. Man is the one who has done wrong, offended and hurt God. It is man who has broken off the friendship and relationship with God ([Romans 3:23](#); [Romans 8:6-8](#)). Therefore, man is the one who is to apologize and ask forgiveness, and God is the One who is to have mercy and do the forgiving. If God chooses to have mercy, it comes from a heart of grace, not because man deserves it.
4. Man cannot heal God's heart. Man's sin breaks the heart of God ([Romans 5:6, 8, 10](#)). Therefore, man's offense is primarily against love; it is primarily against God's very nature of love, mercy, and peace. Since man's main offense is breaking the heart of God, he can only cast himself upon the love of God, apologize and ask forgiveness and trust God to forgive. This is the glorious message of salvation. If man turns to God and asks forgiveness, God forgives and accepts man back into His glorious grace.
5. Man cannot save himself ([Ephes. 2:8-9](#)). No matter what law or work was chosen to be the channel for salvation, there would be some men who could never keep that particular law or perform that particular work. If salvation were by law and works, man could never be saved. There are always many who are totally unable to work and earn their way: the deformed, the poor, the sick, the weary, the underprivileged, the disadvantaged, the oppressed, and many, many others. However, the needy are always before God's keen eyes, and He counts them precious. Therefore, He has made provision for salvation by grace and by grace alone.
6. Man cannot make God love him ([Titus 3:4-7](#)). If salvation were by law and works, the love of God could never be known. God would be forced to save and bless us because He owes us, not because He loves us. Our works would forever require Him to pay our wages. He would not be free to do something for us freely simply because He loved us. We would never know what it is to be loved by God. We would know only what it is to be paid by God for work done.
7. Man cannot set himself free and bring about liberty of conscience. If we were saved by law and works, liberty and freedom of spirit and conscience would never be experienced. We constantly fail and come short. This eats and gnaws away at us. If God does not forgive us simply because He loves us, then what can remove the guilt and aggravation of failure from our hearts? The law? No, for the law only points out our failure, and once we have failed we have failed, and the gnawing away of conscience begins. The only way for the gnawing and guilt of conscience to be removed is for God to forgive us for failing and to convince us of His forgiveness. This He has done by grace—His grace.

**"Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity" ([Matthew 7:22-23](#)).**

**"Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin" ([Romans 3:20](#)).**

**"Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified" ([Galatians 2:16](#)).**

**"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast" ([Ephes. 2:8-9](#)).**

**"But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost" ([Titus 3:4-5](#)).**

5. The reason salvation is by grace and not by works is to prevent men from ever boasting. God is the Supreme and Majestic Being of the universe. He is the Creator of all that is in heaven and earth. God is the One who dwells in the ultimate of light and holiness and who deserves all the worship and glory of eternity. The honor and glory due His name are not to be shared with anyone. If man was saved by some effort of his own, he would be due some credit, some boast, some honor. This God cannot allow. His very nature forbids it. As God, He is the Supreme glory of the universe, and as the Supreme Being, He is to receive the supreme glory—that is, all glory and praise. His Supremacy—His being God—demands it.

**Thought 1.** How small we are and how glorious God is!

**"Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped [from boasting], and all the world may become guilty before God" ([Romans 3:19](#)).**

**"Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith" ([Romans 3:27](#)).**

### **DEEPER STUDY # 9 ([Ephesians 1:7](#)) Forgiveness**

**([Ephesians 1:7](#)) Forgiveness:** the word "forgiveness" (*aphesin*) means "to send off, to send away, to release, to let go". The word for "sin" (*paraptōmatōn*) means "transgression, trespass, a falling by the way, or deviating from the way".

**All men.....**

1. have transgressed the law of God.
2. have deviated from God.
3. have fallen from the way of God.

Therefore, all men stand guilty of having broken the law of God, and the penalty for breaking the law is death. However, the blood of Jesus Christ brings forgiveness to men. **How?** Jesus Christ died for man. He took the penalty of sins and bore the punishment

Himself. He was able to do this because He was the *Perfect* and *Ideal Man*, and as the *Ideal Man*, He could stand for and represent all men. When He died, He died as the *Ideal Man*, as the Representative for all men.

Any person who really believes that Jesus Christ died for him is forgiven his sins. God takes his faith and *counts* it as the death of Jesus Christ. God sees the man as being *in Jesus Christ*, as being in the death of Jesus Christ. God *counts* the death of Jesus Christ for the death of the man. Therefore, the guilt and penalty for breaking God's laws are completely removed. The man's sins and guilt are sent away or washed away by the blood of Jesus Christ.

**"Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins" ([Acts 5:31](#)).**

**"Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins" ([Acts 13:38](#)).**

**"To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me [Christ Jesus]" ([Acts 26:18](#)).**

**"In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace" ([Ephes. 1:7](#)).**

## **5. ([Ephesians 1:8](#)) Wisdom— Prudence— Understanding: the fourth blessing—God has given us wisdom and understanding.**

Again, note that both blessings come to us through Jesus Christ. Common sense tells us that God will give His wisdom and understanding only to those who honor Him and His Son.

1. The word "**wisdom**" (*sophia*) means "**seeing and knowing the truth**". It is seeing and knowing what to do. It grasps the great truths of life. It sees the answers to the problems of life and death, God and man, time and eternity, good and evil—the deep things of God and of the universe.

This wisdom is found only in Jesus Christ and is promised only to those who search after Him with all their heart ([1 Cor. 1:30](#); [1 Cor. 2:10-16](#); [Ephes. 1:8](#); [Phil. 2:5f](#); [James 1:5](#)).

**"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" ([Romans 11:33](#)).**

**"But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greek, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God" ([1 Cor. 1:24](#)).**

**"But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" ([1 Cor. 1:30](#)).**

**"But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the Spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ" ([1 Cor. 2:9-16](#)).**

**"Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence" ([Ephes. 1:8](#)).**

**"In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" ([Col. 2:3](#)).**

2. The word **"prudence"** (*phronēsei*) means **"seeing how to use and do the truth"**. It is seeing the direction to take. It is understanding, insight, the ability to solve day to day problems. It is a down-to-earth practical understanding of things.

**"That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: the eyes of your understanding being enlightened" ([Ephes. 1:17-18](#)).**

**"For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding" ([Col. 1:9](#)).**

**"That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ" ([Col. 2:2](#)).**

**"Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things" ([2 Tim. 2:7](#)).**

**"And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life" ([1 John 5:20](#)).**

"For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding" ([Proverbs 2:6](#)).

"Counsel is mine, and sound wisdom: I am understanding; I have strength" ([Proverbs 8:14](#)).

## 6. ([Ephesians 1:9-10](#)) Mystery, of God's Will: the fifth blessing—God has revealed the mystery of His will to us.

This is the key thought and great theme of Ephesians. (William Barclay has an excellent description of this point and he should be consulted by the person who wishes to study the point in depth. *The Letters to the Galatians and Ephesians*, p.96f.)

**Remember:** in the Bible a mystery is not something mysterious and difficult to understand. Rather, it is a truth that has been locked up in God's plan for ages until He was ready to reveal it to man. When the time came, He unlocked the truth and opened it up to man. A mystery is a truth revealed by God that had never before been known. (See [1 Cor. 2:7](#) for a list of all the mysteries of the Bible.)

**The mystery of God's will can be simply stated:** God is to gather together and unify all things in a spirit of peace and harmony—all things, both visible and invisible. All things are to be brought to a peaceful and eternal state under the authority and glorification of Jesus Christ. God is moving history toward that climactic consummation.

Paul's great thought in [Ephes. 1:9-10](#) **says several things**. (It is impossible to list all the points beside the Scripture in the outline.)

1. God has an eternal purpose and plan for the world, and it is His pleasure to bring it about. He joys and rejoices to bring it about, and what He does is good. It is all good.

2. There is terrible division throughout the universe. The need for God "**to gather all things in heaven and earth**" indicates division (cp. [Ephes. 6:12](#)). And the fact that God's primary concern through all the ages has been to harmonize the divisions shows how devastating and horrible the division really is.

3. There is to be a consummation, a climax of history—a *fullness of time*, a new order—in which all things will be unified and harmonized and brought to a peaceful state under the authority of Jesus Christ. History is in the hands of God.

The word Paul uses is "**dispensation**" (*oikonomia*) which literally means, "**household arrangement**." The idea is that the universe is a house under the management of God. God is handling, planning, arranging, and administering all things toward a climactic consummation for Christ and His followers.

In that climactic day all disharmony and division and evil will be subjected and "**harmonized**" (*anakephalaioō*) under Christ. A new and perfect and eternal creation will be established for the Lord and His followers throughout the universe.

"But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father" ([Galatians 4:4-6](#)).

"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" ([Ephes. 1:4](#)).

"And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord" ([Ephes. 3:9-11](#)).

"Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" ([Phil. 2:9-11](#)).

"Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures" ([James 1:18](#)).

4. Jesus Christ is God's appointed Head over the new creation and new order. He is God's *Head over the church*, which is God's new creation in the present world and order of things ([Ephes. 1:22-23](#)). And He is to be God's *Head over the new creation* in the future world and order of things ([James 1:18](#)).

"And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all" ([Ephes. 1:22-23](#)).

"But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ" ([Ephes. 4:15](#)).

"For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the Saviour of the body" ([Ephes. 5:23](#)).

"And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence" ([Col. 1:18](#)).

"And not holding the head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God" ([Col. 2:19](#)).



5. The church is the Lord's instrument of reconciliation and peace, His representative body upon the earth.

As the instrument of the Lord, **the church is to do two things.**

- a. The church is to take Christ and His message of reconciliation and peace to the world. Through "**His body, the church,**" all division and disorder among men are to be condemned, and His message of harmony and peace is to be proclaimed.
- b. The church is to practice reconciliation upon the earth. "**In the church**" all laws, barriers, and divisions are to be done away with. They are to be nonexistent. The church is to be a speck, an embryo of heaven upon the earth.

**"To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" ([2 Cor. 5:19-21](#)).**

**"And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for edifying of the body of Christ" ([Ephes. 4:11-12](#)).**

## **7. ([Ephesians 1:11-13](#)) Inheritance: the sixth blessing—God has given us an inheritance, that is, made us the heritage of God Himself.**

**Note several significant points.**

1. The inheritance or heritage was predestinated, that is, foreordained. God works all things out after the counsel of His own will. He must, for only God knows what is best. And nothing could be better than to be given the greatest inheritance possible: that of being made the very heritage of God, the very possession of God.

2. The inheritance is clearly stated in the words "**that we should be,**" that is, that we should exist eternally. God gives the believer an eternal *state of being*—an eternal existence. In fact, the word "**inheritance**" (*eklērothēmen*) means *heritage*. God takes the believer and makes him His own heritage and possession. The believer himself is made the inheritance of God. He is given the glorious privilege of *being*, of living and existing forever as God's most *cherished possession and heritage*. He becomes the most precious gem and treasure of God. This is the believer's inheritance, his heritage.

**"Yet they are thy people and thine inheritance, which thou broughtest out by thy mighty power and by thy stretched out arm" ([Deut. 9:29](#); cp. [Exodus 19:5](#)).**

**"For the LORD'S portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance" ([Deut. 32:9](#)).**

**"Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine" ([Exodus 19:5](#)).**

**"For the LORD hath chosen Jacob unto himself, and Israel [believers] for his peculiar treasure" ([Psalm 135:4](#)).**

**"...I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine" ([Isaiah 43:1](#)).**

**"And they [believers] shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him" ([Malachi 3:17](#)).**

**"But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us" ([2 Cor. 4:7](#)).**

**"Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the spirit" ([Ephes. 2:19-21](#)).**

**"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light" ([1 Peter 2:9](#)).**

**3. The reason God makes us His inheritance is that we should exist to the praise of His glory. We shall live forever in the new heavens and earth as the perfect demonstration of His glory.**

The fact that God would take sinners—totally depraved sinners—and save them will cause praise upon praise to be heaped upon His name. His unbelievable love will be seen and glorified forever and ever by all creatures—both of heaven and of earth, both visible and invisible, both now and yet to be. All shall stand in stark amazement at God's spectacular glory—the glory of His eternal grace and love shown to the world in His dear Son, Jesus Christ.

**"To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved" ([Ephes. 1:6](#)).**

**"For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come. By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name" ([Hebrews 13:14-15](#)).**

**"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light" ([1 Peter 2:9](#)).**

**"And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing" ([Rev. 5:11-12](#)).**

**"After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen" ([Rev. 7:9-12](#)).**

**"And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God" ([Rev. 19:1](#)).**

#### **4. How does a person receive the inheritance?**

**This verse says there are two ways ([Ephes. 1:13](#)).**

- a. By hearing the Word of God. A person has to hear the Word of God before he can ever know the truth, the glorious gospel of salvation. He cannot believe in Jesus Christ unless he first hears about Christ.

**"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" ([Romans 10:17](#)).**

**"Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever" ([1 Peter 1:23](#)).**

- b. By believing and trusting in Jesus Christ.

**"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life" ([John 5:24](#)).**

**"That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" ([Romans 10:9-10](#)).**

## **8. ([Ephesians 1:13-14](#)) [Holy Spirit](#)— Seal— Guarantee: the seventh blessing—God has sealed us with the Holy Spirit.**

The word "earnest" (*arrabōn*) means “pledge, guarantee, a down payment”. The Holy Spirit is given to the believer to give the believer perfect assurance of his salvation. We know that we are redeemed—that we are God's cherished possession—by the Holy Spirit who lives within us.

**Again note:** Why does God give us such a glorious guarantee as His own wonderful presence? That His glory might be praised eternally.

**"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God" ([Romans 8:16](#)).**

**"Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts" ([2 Cor. 1:22](#)).**

**"And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father" ([Galatians 4:6](#)).**