



EPHESIANS 1:4-8

IN HIM
I AM

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Know: Read Ephesians 1:4-8

Note: Read slowly, carefully marking keywords- continue to mark the words from previous lessons—Mark keywords with a different color or with a symbol to differentiate them.

- In Him, In Christ
- Predestined
- Creation/ foundation
- World
- Holy
- Blameless
- Adoption

Observation: Study notes below for context. Journal your thoughts or questions.

What: What does it mean to be adopted? How is adoption by God different than adoption by human parents?

I heard a story recently about a boy who built a model sailboat from scratch. He had spent many days and weeks building it. When it was finally completed, he decided to test it out on the open water close to where he lived. The boy loved the boat and was very proud of what he had built.

Excited, he went to the water, placed the boat into it, and gently pushed it. Catching the sails, the boat cut through the water. Before the boy realized what was happening, the boat faded off into the distance and disappeared.

Sometime later, the boy walked past a shop window and saw the sailboat he had labored to build. He went into the store and went up to it. He picked it up and saw his initials on the bottom. Noticing the price, he put it down and left the store with determination. He *would* buy it back.

He went home to see what odd jobs he could do. The boy worked hard. He saved his pennies. And one day, he had enough money. The boy went back to the store and bought back his boat.

As he left the store, holding the sailboat close to his chest, the boy whispered, “You’re twice my boat. I made you, and I bought you.”

Paul, in Ephesians, unveiled the story of redemption. We were God’s masterpiece. He formed us and breathed his very life into us, but we got lost. God decided beforehand that He would do

anything to ensure we would be His. Jesus purchased us back with the price that only God could pay- the price of blood shed by a sinless man.

We are twice His. He made us, and He bought us.

We are not adopted in name only. He gave us His nature and Spirit so that we carry the same blood. His DNA is our own. (Divine Nature Attributes).

“Just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world...” Ephesians 1:4

The word foundation in Greek is *katabole*, which means “throwing or laying down, injection, or conception.” It refers to the fall.

The word for world is *kosmos*, meaning: “world, universe, everything created.”

Paul is saying that we were chosen in Christ before the “throwing down/ fall” of the world. We were in Christ before all that existed. We were chosen before Adam sinned.

This is a thought that deserves some pause. Many people were brought to Christ because they were told they were sinners and needed forgiveness for those sins.

I used to share the gospel in this pattern, taking people through the path of their need for salvation:

1. “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” (Romans 3:23)
2. “For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Romans 6:23)
3. “Jesus answered and said to him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” (John 3:3)
4. “Jesus said to him, “I am the way, truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.” John 14:6
5. “That if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. For the Scripture says, “Whoever believes in Him will not be disappointed.” (Romans 10:9-11)

While all this is true, the problem with this pattern is that it is incomplete, a partial picture that distorts the whole Gospel.

The narrative of scripture began at creation. The separation began in the fall. We must go back to the beginning to understand why we needed saving.

Before the creation of all things, God chose to love us, so He created one of us (Adam) in His image and likeness, breathing His life within him. He created Adam and Eve, who knew no sin, to rule over the earth and keep it safe and free from corruption.

Unfortunately, they did fail.

Satan impregnated the world with the seed of all manner of evil: death through sin, disease, poverty, and calamity. When God came searching for Adam and Eve, they hid from Him. In their shame, they became scared of the one who loved them. In His mercy, He drove them from the Garden of Pleasure so they would not eat from the Tree of Life and live forever in sin and shame.

Adam and Eve began their family- *in their own image*, and from that point on, humankind would live as slaves to sin, their hearts turning away from Him. They needed a Rescuer.

Only God could do it.

“That we would be holy and blameless before Him.” Ephesians 1:4

Blameless means “as a sacrifice without spot or blemish.”

Jesus is the “Lamb slain before the foundation of the world.” (Revelation 13:8)

He is the “Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.” John 1:36

In the Old Covenant, under the Mosaic law, God provided a way for the Israelites to cover their sin for a year. The blood of a perfect animal would provide what was needed for temporary forgiveness.

Inspected for any spot or blemish, the animal would be given as a sacrifice.

Holiness means “apartness, holiness, sacredness, separateness.” To be set apart in the Old Covenant was to remove oneself from the blemish. To be holy was to not associate with sin, death, or disease. Either the blemished one had to be removed, or purification rituals had to be observed to be holy again if one came in contact with unholiness.

When Jesus came, He was perfectly holy. When unholy people came to Him, He did not separate Himself from them; He made them pure. When sickness, sin or disease came near, Jesus made them clean.

In Jesus, we are as He is.

His holiness is our holiness.

His blamelessness is ours.

You are in Him, holy and blameless.

“In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on 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 on us. In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace which He lavished on us. In all wisdom and insight.” Ephesians 1:5-8

Predestined means: “to predetermine, decide beforehand.”

In love, the triune God decided that we be sons and daughters- His kids. Rest assured, His grace is far more powerful than any sin. Jesus defeated the power of sin on the cross. He did not pick and choose who would be His; there are not some who were chosen to be beyond salvation and so corrupt that He rejected them. He wanted us all back.

The Gospel is good news!

When I share the Gospel, I now begin with this,

“For God so loved YOU, He gave His Son.”

The Gospel is that Jesus knew you. He loved you. He chose you. He came as you, died as you, rose as you so you can be as He is in perfect union with God.

God stooped down and served you! He came to make you one with Him.

The gospel is that Jesus traded places with us. He became the nature of sin to make you righteous and restore your value.

He promises never to leave or forsake you. You stand secure in a God who keeps his promises.