

*God's Past
Provisions For
His Children*

*by
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"Paul, an Apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints, which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus: Grace be to you and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who hath Blessed us with all spiritual Blessings in heavenly places in Christ: 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, to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the beloved. In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace; wherein He hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself that in the dispensation of the fulness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in Him: in whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will."

Ephesians 1:1-11

The first eleven verses of Ephesians , chapter one, are the most concentrated verses in the Bible. They contain more truth in fewer words than any other portion of the Word. It is amazing to me, the more I study these verses, how concentrated they are. Whole libraries could be written on just these eleven verses, and indeed, have been. Whole volumes of sermons could be preached on these verses, and they have been, and they have not yet begun to exhaust what is here. If you can master these eleven verses, you can refute any error that there is in the world. These verses refute every error that has crept into the Church.

There are ten verbs in this passage that distil all this truth. They are: hath blessed, Vs 3; hath chosen, Vs 4; having predestinated, Vs 5; hath made, Vs 6; have redemption, Vs 7; hath abounded, Vs 8; having made known, Vs 9; hath purposed, Vs 9; have obtained, Vs 11; and being predestinated, Vs 11. Every one of these verbs is either in the past tense, or in the present perfect tense, showing us something that happened in the past, the results of which we enjoy today and forever. Parents make plans for their family and children, often even before they are married . After they are married they anticipate the arrival of their children and carry forward the plans they have made. They plan a nursery and put bright pictures on the walls and buy furnishings. They might buy insurance policies to insure their financial future. They might do any number of things, but the point is-parents make plans for their children. Often our plans for our children go awry. God's plans **never** go awry! These ten verbs tell us the plans God made for His children before the world was ever created.

The first of these verbs is "hath blessed." Notice that it is in the past tense. He does not do this when we go down to an altar. He does not do this when we fast and pray. He does not do this because we walk with Him. He did it ages ago, and we enjoy them all here and now as we walk with Him. He has made every provision for us but there is much confusion among Christians at large as to what these

blessings are. If you listen to Christian radio or watch Christian television or if you read the religious junk mail that comes to your home, you might be of the opinion that these blessings are a lot of money, or that they are good health, of how to be influential. None of these is even hinted at here because it says they are spiritual blessings with which God has blessed all of His children.

We have to admit that in this country we have been singularly blessed with material blessings. The poorest of us eats better than most of the rest of the world. I have no doubt that these bountiful blessing that God has given to our land are because of the Godly lives of our forefathers. I have no doubt that He has blessed us because of that, but those are bonus blessings, those are not the blessings he is speaking of here. We also know that there are many of our brothers scattered throughout the world who do not have the material blessings we have, but they do have all of these spiritual blessings. "He hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings."

You can never do anything to get any more blessings; you can never attain unto a level of holiness to be worthy of more blessing. He has no more blessing to give-He has already given every blessing that He has to every child of His and all we have to do is realize and enjoy them. Now, here again, if you are looking to the popular Christian press or television you will be led astray as to where you can find them. Where do we find all these spiritual blessings? They are found **'IN CHRIST.'** Next, they are **in heavenly places.** They are not on this earth. They are in Christ, and in heavenly places. It is said that sometimes Christians are so heavenly minded that they are of no earthly good. I submit that we are of no earthly good until we are heavenly minded.

The second of these verbs is "hath chosen." Notice again that this is in the past tense. This Greek word "hath chosen" is the same word that is elsewhere translated election. It is the elect who are chosen, we are the elect because we are chosen. He hath chosen us; we did not

choose Him. None of us chose Him, He chose us. He did not choose us when we became miserable in our sinful lives, He did not choose us when we were going astray. He chose us eons ago in the abyss of eternity past when He made plans for His children. He chose us then, not because we were good, for we were not good; not because we were worth anything, for we were not.

Why did He love us? What did He see in us to draw forth His love? Only one thing, our deep need. But since He chose us before the foundation of the world, that leaves out all of the efforts of man to please God so He would choose us, because this choice was before the foundation of the world. He elected us for a purpose, and what was that purpose? He tells us here the purpose for which He chose, or elected us was "that we should be holy and without blame before Him." We read elsewhere that we are holy when we are saved. We are holy, and are called holy ones, that is, saints. Not just certain ones who attain unto a perceived level of holiness, but everyone whom He has chosen, and who has believed is holy. We are not really blameless yet. We read elsewhere that He will present us blameless to the Father in that day, and that is just as certain now, as is our being holy and called before the foundation of the world. When God purposes something, He sees that it is accomplished. He chose us that we should be holy. He chose us that we should be without blame. All the troubles and trials that we have in this world are beating the blame out of us. That is the purpose of them. "He hath chosen us..." These few words tell us the deep doctrine of election.

The next is "having predestined us." This again is in the past tense. It was already done long before we came along. The very word predestined means to mark out, or to set aside before hand. There are people for whom this is a very hard doctrine, but it should not be. It is a very precious doctrine. Some teach that because God is sovereign and can do as He pleases that He has chosen some to be saved and

others to be lost. Of course God is sovereign and can do as He pleases, but the scripture never equates, or builds the doctrine of predestination upon God's sovereignty. Rather, it is built upon His foreknowledge. "Whom He foreknew, them He did predestinate," Rom. 8:29 and "Being elect according to the foreknowledge of God," I Peter 1:2. If God does not know everything beforehand, He certainly is not the God we Christians claim He is. Knowing these things beforehand He made plans. He made plans for you! He set you apart. He Marked you out from the world. "He "predestinated us to the adoption of children."

In the new Testament, when you read of the new birth you are reading of our nature that He imparts to us. When you read of the adoption, you are reading about our legal rights, which we have in Christ. Our children have certain rights guaranteed by law and even we, their parents, cannot abrogate them. God proclaimed them in the doctrine of adoption. He has pledged all of heaven to the security of His children. Do you think there is any danger there? He predestined us, His children, to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself. He predestinated us to sonship-that is we have rights in Christ and all the devils in hell cannot do anything about it. We can come boldly to the throne of grace. We can pray to Him at any time and in any place, and He hears us. We know that He cares for us because He is our Father. There is a saying "I know I'm somebody, cause God don't make no junk." In Adam, we all became junk! In Christ you are a child of God, chosen before the foundation of the world and he made plans for you. That is what the doctrine of predestination means. He determined beforehand that you, whom He saw as His child, had certain rights and privileges. He would see that they were carried forward and that is the good pleasure of his will. That is why He did it. That is where His sovereignty comes in, He can bring it to pass because He is able to do what He wills to do.

The next verb is "He hath made us accepted." Here again it is in the past tense. How did He make us accepted?

Solely on the basis of His grace. Many Christians say, "Oh, I am so unworthy," thinking that is humility, but that demeans both what God has done and what He has said. The first lesson of the Gospel is that in Adam, we are all unworthy, but the second lesson is that in Christ, God has made us worthy. You are worthy because He has made you worthy. He has made you accepted. This is true whether you feel like it or not, it has not to do with our feelings. Whenever you feel blue or are overwhelmed by your failures, read these truths in the scriptures. Remember that your Father knows all about you and loves you anyway. You are His child and you are His child because He wanted you to be His child.

The doctrine of adoption has always been precious to me because when I was a child, a cousin of mine said to me, "My daddy loves me more than your daddy loves you." I asked him why he would say a thing like that and he replied, "I am adopted. My daddy didn't have to take me, but yours had to take you." You are God's child because He wants you, He chose you and made plans for you. Why did He do it? Because of Christ! Why did He do it? To the praise of His glory.

The fifth verb is "we have" which is present tense. We already have redemption, not someday, not maybe, but here and now. Redemption means to buy back, or bought back from sin. We have redemption through His blood. Not just that we were bought from sin, but we have forgiveness of sins right now. There are many Christians who don't know this fact. They do not know that we are freed from the tyranny of sin.

Our sixth verb is "hath abounded." Do you know that God has abounded toward you? That He has abounded in every thing? Jesus said that He came that we might not only live, but live abundantly. Here we see that God has abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence. The marvel of it is that as we walk with Him in this life, He

makes the abounding wisdom and prudence ours in our life. We are able to ascertain His will. We are able to grow in grace. This abundance of wisdom and prudence has already been provided and is ours for profit today.

The seventh verb is "having made known." Do you know the will of God? You can. He has made His will known in His Word and He will make His will known in your life as you apply His Word to your life. Most Christians today do not know God's will. Paul here calls it "the mystery of God's will." A mystery, in the Bible, is not something mysterious in the modern sense of the word. It means something that only the initiated understand. So those who do not take the trouble to know God's will through His Word will never know His will in their lives. The reason is because it is only through His Word that His will is revealed.

The eighth verb is "hath purposed." Again, this is in the past tense. Do you have any doubt that what God has purposed He **can** do? Do you have any doubt that what He has purposed He **will** do? He purposed many things, among them all the things we have covered so far. When did He purpose these things? Before the foundation of the world-vs.4. He knew our great need, so He purposed to supply every need. He knew we would love Him and He chose us before we ever were.

In verse nine we have the ninth verb, "have obtained," that we have obtained an inheritance. This is in the present perfect tense. We already have an inheritance in Christ. Every child is an heir of his parents, but he has to wait either until his parents die, or sometimes until he reaches a certain age before he can enter into his inheritance, but the believer has his inheritance in Christ here and now. Ours is a boundless and eternal inheritance for every need that we could ever have. Perhaps not for every need that we perceive we have, but for every need that we really do have. And we have already obtained it! It is because of our sonship

that we have this inheritance. But here is the big secret: The extent that we enter into this inheritance in this life is the extent that we will enjoy it for all eternity. We have far too few years to do that. We have no time to waste. We have an inheritance. We have it in Christ. We have it now. We have it because of His Grace.

The last of these verbs returns to that word predestined. "Being predestined according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will." The former Roman Catholic bishop of Denver once said, "if God would have asked my advice on this matter, He would certainly have done things differently." I don't remember what He was referring to, but I am very glad that He does not ask anybody's advice. He said to Job, "Who being His counselor has instructed Him?" He predestined us according to His purpose and He works all things after the counsel of His known will. He chose us. He called us. He did so because He purposed to do so. Like a good father He made plans for His children and we have only seen a part of them so far. God has plans for you! Study these verses, especially when you are blue, when things go wrong. and you will see again that He has everything under control.

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