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### Predestination and Adoption

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## PREDESTINATION AND ADOPTION

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS  
NUMBER 4  
EPHESIANS 1:5-6

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EPHESIANS 1:5-6 "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."

God has blessed the world by giving us a perfect plan, but God has had to deal with imperfect men. Grace is God's perfect plan and we enter into that perfect plan through faith in Jesus Christ. One day we will move into a perfect resurrection body and live with God through all eternity.

Now God has a plan for you as an individual. God chose us in Christ, and when we choose Christ, we share in his election.

The expression "in the heavenlies" is used five ways in Ephesians.

1. It is used for divine blessings in verse 3.
2. It is used for the sphere of Christ's power in verse 20.
3. It is used to refer to the Christian life in Ephesians 2:6.
4. It is used for the sphere of angelic activity in Ephesians 3:10.
5. It is used to refer to the spiritual conflict in Ephesians 6:12.

Now in our last study we saw the Father's plan for man described in the doctrine of election.

"According as" comes from "Kathos" and is formed from "kata and os" and means he is going to pull back the curtain and let us see how he chose Christ in eternity past. Everything that is described in verses 3-14 centers around this word "chosen." Then we also saw how every believer is potentially holy, and one day that potential will be realized. All believers are without blame in the presence of him in love.

EPHESIANS 1:5 "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will," The word "predestination" does not mean fatalism. Immediately when the word predestination is mentioned, many people jump to the conclusion that this means you are either predestined to be carnal or spiritual, and you have to be that way whether you choose to or not. Now that is not true. It is so easy to distort this word. It is "pro orizo" and means to pre-design. God did some pre-designing in eternity past. Election is the plan of God and when you believe in Christ you share in this plan. Pre designing has to do with the things God provided for you in eternity past. God had the good sense to know all you would need and to provide for that need. He pre-designed something for you, something you would receive at the point of salvation, something Adam had in creation but lost in the fall. Man is born without a human spirit, but is born with an old sin nature and receives back his human spirit when he accepts Christ. The human spirit, at the time of conversion, is like an empty closet with many empty shelves. The shelves are designed to hold Bible doctrine, and as you learn doctrine, you store it away in your spirit. Then this doctrine is cranked over into the soul as you need it, and this is the way you live day by day as a Christian. Your self-consciousness, mentality, volition, conscience and emotion can take spiritual truth and in this way handle your old sin nature and keep it under subjection. So millions of years ago God pre-designed something for us, a complete Canon of Scripture, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, the principle of the filling of the Holy Spirit whereby we can learn Bible doctrine and transfer it to the human spirit.

"Pro orizo," is an aorist tense and it divides eternity from time. Millions of years ago God designed all we would need. Knowing what we would be like, with all of our sin and all of our weaknesses, he still provided for us. God knew what we would be

like on the inside, but still he provided for us even though we didn't deserve such consideration. The design came before the person. The plan came before we entered the world, before any human was ever born. God did the planning, that's what the active voice means. You and I were not there. This pre designing is a participle and the action of a participle in a Greek sentence always comes before the action of the main verb which is "choosing." So he pre designed the plan before he chose Christ. "Pro orizo" occurred before "ek lego." He planned the party before he invited you to come.

Now in the mind of God, election and predestination are co-terminus and to him they run together. But just for human understanding, we say, "Predestination" comes before "election." Election means you are in the plan of God and you will never get out of that plan. You can't lose your salvation. No sin of yours can undo the cross. No sin of yours can blot out the salvation he provided for you. And remember, you cannot commit a sin for which Christ did not die. Now by unbelief you can put yourself outside the reach of Christ, and the only sin that will cause anyone to be eternally lost is the sin of unbelief. This is indeed the unpardonable sin. If you think you can commit a sin so big that it will take you out of the plan of God, you are wrong. All I can say about that is "malarkey."

When you suffer you can say, "My suffering is unique." Well, it isn't but people often think that and say that. The only unique suffering was his suffering on the cross. Then when you have frustration and problems and troubles, you fall apart and in so doing, you say, "God didn't think of poor little me." Well, he did think of poor little you, and he planned for your every need.

You will never face a problem for which God did not plan the solution and that is why it says here he "chose us" and he "predestinated us." "Us" is plural and it refers to every single believer.

"Unto the adoption" is a very misunderstood phrase, and for this reason. We have the word "adoption" in our English language, but it is not the same meaning as the word here in Ephesians. When we say adoption in English, we mean that a child not born in the family has been taken into the family and made a part of that family by adoption. But that is not the meaning here. The word here is "huiotesia" and it means to recognize the adult status of a son, to officially receive a son as an adult. The Romans were fantastic men and men of self-discipline and they developed a manly and courageous race. They taught self-discipline and the recognition of the rights of others. At the completion of this training period, when the boy became fourteen years of age, they would have a ceremony of adoption. Up to that time the son wore a youth "toga." But on that occasion that youth "toga" was removed and a man's "toga" was placed on him and he was accepted as an adult. They put this adult robe on him and said "huiotesia" and it meant "I now adopt you, I now recognize you as an adult son." They at that time gave the son his own bank account and assigned certain responsible tasks to him. The key meaning of adoption was responsibility.

1. This adopted son could now choose a wife, provided he had completed his military preparation.
2. This adopted son became a soldier in the army.
3. He now had the right to vote.
4. He could manage part of the estate.
5. If he made a decision, it was binding and he had to stand by it.

Now that is adoption as it is meant here. Now at the moment of salvation, God adopts us. Every believer is in full-time service. Jesus Christ was this kind of a son. When we read, "God gave his only begotten son" the word for son is "huios." So when we believe in Christ, we enter into relationship with him and he is an adult son and he says, "I am adopting you."

That means we are to have responsibility and we are in full-time service. The moment you enter into the plan, you are an adopted son, and you can go from being a baby Christian to an adopted son by learning Bible doctrine. He adopted you and that means there is a purpose for your life. You are entered into union with Christ and you are in the plan and you can fulfill the purpose he has for you. Now you will sin after salvation but this does not affect the adoption.

(Illustration: Suppose a boy enters West Point. He is a cadet. He starts out as a cadet and if he is successful in the four-year course he ends as a Second Lieutenant. Between the cadet stage and the Second Lieutenant stage there has been a four-year training period. It is anticipated that he will become an officer at the end of that four years. Many master sergeants train cadets who will one day be higher in rank than they are. This master sergeant adopts the cadet, and knowing one day he will be over him, he is careful to give him correct training. Because you are predestinated, you are now adopted and in the adoption, you accept responsibility to learn all he has provided for you to learn.)

"Adoption through Jesus Christ." He is seated at the right hand of God and you share in his sonship. You are in union with Christ. Because you share his sonship, you receive an appointment. And to fulfill this appointment, you must know doctrine. Now suppose you have failed sometimes, so what? The plan goes right on, so pick yourself up and move on. The "to himself" means that God wants adopted adult sons in his family. "According to" is the preposition "kata" and means the norm or standard of his good pleasure. The word "good pleasure" is "eudokia" and it means his "boule," his plan, his purpose, his design. According to the purpose of his design or will.

EPHESIANS 1:6 "To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved." This verse says that the Father's plan is acceptable. Leading to the praise and purpose and approval of the glory of his grace. Because God is perfect it is called his "glory." "Fall short of the glory of God" and glory means his perfect purpose and plan. How can we produce divine good instead of human good? Well, ignorance of doctrine plus carnality equals the production of human good. Knowledge of doctrine plus the filling of the Holy Spirit equals divine good. God's plan calls for divine good and rejects human good. There is no place in the divine plan for human good. To produce divine good is the subject of the perfect plan. The answer to this is the one word "Grace".

#### THE DOCTRINE OF GRACE

1. Definition--Grace is all that God is free to do for mankind on the basis of the cross. Grace is the work of God on behalf of man. Grace is the title of God's plan.
2. Concept--Grace depends on who and what God is, never who and what man is. Therefore, grace excludes human good and human merit.
3. The conflict--Grace equals God doing the work and man simply receiving in a non-meritorious way what God has provided. God gets all the credit. Faith is the absence of human merit. The conflict is between grace and legalism. Legalism is man doing the work and God is suppose to get the credit and God is suppose to bless man on this basis.
4. The goal--The greatest thing God can do for any member of the human race is to make him like his son and this is accomplished by salvation, by the filling of the Holy Spirit, by knowledge of doctrine, and by ultimate sanctification, which comes in a resurrection body with no old sin nature. Sanctification isn't something you do for God, it is something God does for you.

5. A universal fact--Every believer has tasted grace at least once in his life--no exceptions.  
1 PETER 2:3 "If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious."  
 The unbeliever in Romans 5 is said to be the enemy of God. The believer is said to be the child of God. God did the most for his enemies for he paid for their sins. Now if he did the most for his enemies, what will he do for his children? The answer, more than the most. This is grace. At the point of salvation, every believer tasted grace. And if we learn doctrine, we can have all the doctrine we want to have.
6. The blessing--Once you accept Christ as Saviour, God is just waiting to pour out his grace upon you as a believer. Isaiah 30:18-19 says he is just sitting there patting his foot, waiting to be able to pour out his blessing on you.
7. The hazard--Disorientation to grace is the believer's greatest occupational hazard.  
GALATIANS 5:4 "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace."  
HEBREWS 12:15 "Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled;"
8. In salvation--Look at grace in salvation. Faith is non-meritorious thinking. The object of faith has the merit and gets all the credit.  
 Ephesians 2:8-9  
 We begin the plan of God by grace.
9. The fruit of grace--In growing in the Christian life after salvation, more grace is necessary.
  - a. Grace in prayer. Hebrew 4:16
  - b. Grace in suffering. 2 Cor. 12:9-10
  - c. Grace in releasing power. 2 Tim. 2:1
  - d. Grace in stability. 1 Peter 5:12
10. The product--Grace is the basis for producing divine good.  
2 CORINTHIANS 5:10 "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."  
  - a. God is perfect and his plan is perfect. A perfect plan can only come from a perfect God.
  - b. If man can do anything on his own in the plan, it is no longer a perfect plan. Man is imperfect and his work is imperfect.
  - c. Therefore, grace eliminates human merit and human good.
  - d. It is impossible for any believer to get out of the sphere of the grace of God. Once you accept Christ as Saviour, you will never get what you deserve from God--if we did we would all be dead now.
  - e. Grace is the antithesis of human pride. We are filled with pride when we reject eternal security. We are filled with pride when we fall apart under pressure. We are filled with pride when we think emotion is more important than doctrine.

In verse 6 we read, "leading on to or resulting in the praise of the glory of his grace, in the sphere of which grace hath he made us accepted." The word for accept is "charitoo" and means to accept on the basis of grace. We are not accepted on the basis of who or what we are. We are accepted on the basis of his perfect love and his perfect character. We can't gain it. We can't buy it. "In the beloved" is a perfect, passive, participle. God's love always existed and there never was a time when his love didn't exist. He always loved the Son, therefore, the Son is the beloved. God in his perfect character loved the Son. It is the passive voice for the Son received this love. Now get this--HE HAS THE SAME AMOUNT OF LOVE FOR YOU HE HAS FOR HIS OWN SON. As sons of God, we are loved by the same amount of love as he has for Jesus. The worst person that ever lived is loved by God just as much as you or Christ.

It goes like this--

PREDESTINATED-----CHOSEN-----ADOPTED-----LOVED.

Now that's the plan and you can't improve on that plan. And when you truly come to know who God is, his love means even more. You see, love really depends on the character and life of the one who says, "I love you." He loved you in eternity past, and you weren't even there. O yes you were, for Christ was there, and God loved him and we were potentially a part of him.

SO GOD LOVED YOU NOW JUST AS MUCH AS HE WILL LOVE YOU IN ETERNITY.

In this verse "beloved" is used for Christ but in 1 John 3:2 "beloved" is used for you. God loves you with an unlimited love and he is waiting for you to learn enough doctrine so you can respond to his love.