

THEMES OF EPHESIANS

PART 1 – CHOSEN IN CHRIST

BACKGROUND

Ephesus is the city that teaches us more about the church than any other city.

The word **Ephesus** means '*desirable*' and in many ways, it was certainly a desirable place to live.

In the ancient world, Ephesus was a centre of travel and commerce.

The city was prized as one of the seven wonders of the ancient world.

Ephesus was known as a city of wealth, and power.

Paul returned to the city of Ephesus on his third missionary journey and stayed in the city for three years (Acts 19:8-10). He spent his time addressing false doctrines and pagan practices.

The preaching themes in Ephesus were legendarily deep. They were divided into 2 parts... Chapters 1-3 talk about the theology, the principles, and the concepts of who we are in Christ and chapters 4-6 talk about the practical aspect or how we should live our lives in Christ.

Main texts: EPHESIANS 1:4-6 (NKJV)

*⁴ just as **He chose us in Him** before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love,*

⁵ *having **predestined us to adoption** as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,*

⁶ *to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which **He made us accepted in the Beloved.***

Being in Christ signifies a transformative relationship – a new identity and purpose.

Whenever you see the words '**IN HIM**' or '**IN CHRIST**' that is your location and that is God's promise for you.

2 Corinthians 5:17 – *Therefore, if anyone is **in Christ**, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.*

Romans 8:1 – *There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are **in Christ Jesus.***

In **Ephesians 1:4-6**, there are 3 principles we can learn...

A) IN CHRIST, GOD HAS CHOSEN (SELECTED) YOU

EPHESIANS 1:4

NKJV - ⁴ *just as **He chose us in Him (in Christ)** before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love,*

AMPLIFIED VERSION - ⁴ *just as [in His love] He chose us in Christ [selected us for Himself as His own] ...*

In Christ and in His love, you and I have been chosen by God (AMP... *selected us for Himself as His own*).

To be chosen for Himself as His very own means you and I were handpicked by God for Himself and for His purpose.

We have been selected and therefore we should live a *holy (that is, consecrated, set apart for Him, purpose-driven] and blameless in His sight.*

To be chosen or to be selected entails commitment, privileges, and sacrifices.

This verse says that we have been chosen (selected) to live a different kind of life, a life that is set apart, consecrated, purpose driven in His sight.

B) IN CHRIST, GOD HAS PLANNED FOR YOU TO BE HIS CHILD

EPHESIAN 1:5

NKJV – ⁵ *having **predestined us to adoption** as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,*

NLV – ⁵ *God already **planned** to have us as His own children.*

A **PLAN** or **BLUEPRINT** is a technical term used by the engineers.

It is ***the basis, an intention or decision about what one is going to do.*** It is a detailed drawing showing the layout of the whole building or a project. By looking on the plan, we can know exactly the expected outcome. God has already worked out the plan for your life. Our **destiny is chosen by God**, but **its fulfilment** is decided by us.

God has predestined and planned to have you and me as His very own children.

*Under the **law**, an adopted child qualifies as a ‘natural’ child, stating that an adopted child has the same right as a natural child born to the adoptive parents.*

For us, adopted sons and daughters of God, the right and the inheritance that Jesus has, is the same right and inheritance that God has for us.

2 Peter 1:3 – *for His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness...*

Eph. 1:11 says, *"In [Christ] we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things..."*

Col. 3:24 – *knowing that from the Lord you will receive that inheritance as your reward.*

As adopted children of God, we have been assured an inheritance from our Heavenly Father.

Romans 8:17 – *and if children, then heirs – heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ.*

C) IN CHRIST, GOD HAS ACCEPTED YOU

EPHESIANS 1:6 NKJV – *⁶ to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which **He made us accepted in the Beloved.***

THE MESSAGE – *He wanted us to enter the celebration of his lavish gift-giving by the hand of his beloved Son.*

What does it mean to be accepted by God?

Feeling accepted is a fundamental human need. When we feel accepted, we experience a sense of belongingness, value, and validation. This positive feeling can significantly impact our whole life and change our perspective in life.

Ephesians 2:12 NLT – *In those days you were living apart from Christ. You were excluded from citizenship among the people of Israel, and you did not know the covenant promises God had made to them. You lived in this world without God and without hope.*

Ephesians 2:19 – *Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God.*

The greatest affirmation a foreigner could receive is to acquire or be accepted as a citizenship.

The greatest affirmation that my family and I have received was when our application was accepted to migrate in Australia.

Citizenship implies the status of being free.

Citizens have certain rights and privileges that are denied or partially extended to foreigners residing in the country.

Those who have received their citizenship, you will see the joy and it is worth a celebration.

Being a citizen of heaven is indeed worth a celebration!