

EPHESIANS CHAPTER 1

Review of the Purpose of the Letter

The purpose of this letter is to enlighten the saints in Ephesus of the plan of God, to have them understand the blessing of God to believers (1:3) so that they would not be isolated from Jewish believers and even though they used to be far from Christ they have now been brought near (2:11-15) so that they would understand their purpose on earth in being the new administrators during this time under the title “ekklesia” (3:9-10). Furthermore, they must not conclude that this “ekklesia,” is an afterthought or that Jews were more complete or better in some way. This new administration is in accordance with His eternal purpose, even though it was not revealed previously (3:4-5, 11).

Ephesians 1:3-14 – This passage makes a clear statement concerning the spiritual blessing, a proclamation of a spiritual nature (εὐλογία πνευματικῆ). Remember that this proclamation can be something received through a royal decree or a truth about the person that is revealed by royal decree.

Paul lists five blessings of salvation that stem from God and Jesus (1:3–14).

He wants his readers to understand and rejoice in all that God has done for believers through Jesus Christ. Each section could be translated with “praise”:

1. “Praise God for predestining us” (1:4–6)
2. “Praise God for redeeming us” (1:7-8a)
3. “Praise God for the mystery of His will” (1:8b-10)
4. “Praise God for His purpose” (1:11-12)
5. “Praise God for the sealing of the Holy Spirit” (1:13-14)

Ephesians 1:4-6

Literal translation:

Just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless in the sight of Him in love, having set beforehand us unto adoption through Jesus Christ unto Him according to the good intentions of His will, unto praise of the glory of His grace, in which He endowed us with grace in the one who has been loved.

Replace the pronouns with their antecedents:

Just as **God** chose **believers** in **Jesus** before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless in the sight of **God** in love, having set beforehand **believers** unto adoption through Jesus Christ unto **God** according to the good intentions of **God's** will, unto praise of the glory of **God's** grace, in which **God** endowed **believers** with grace in **Jesus Christ**.

Just as (καθώς kathōs) – The verse begins with this conjunction that functions as an adverb and correlates one idea with another. In this passage, *just as* or *accordingly* fits the passage as it begins to reveal what the spiritual blessings are.

He chose (ἐκλέγομαι eklegomai) – This is a compound word that means to call out. The verb is in the Aorist Indicative tense and indicates the action is a one-time act in the past. The direct object is *us*. In context, the *us* is Paul and the believers in Ephesus. The implication is that it is true of all believers, so we can claim this truth as well.

The verb is in the Middle Voice, which means to choose or pick (for oneself). God is calling out to Himself and for Himself. We receive that action, but the beneficiary of the action is God.

The main sentence is followed by two prepositional phrases: *In Him* and *before the foundation of the world*.

In Him is a phrase. We discovered in the introduction that *In Him* is one of the main themes of the letter. The preposition “en” can refer to a location (in Jerusalem), condition (in fear), means (by), or time (during). Theologians have also suggested that this is “en formula,” a spiritual location: In the Spirit, in the Lord, In Christ. The context will dictate which, but the phrase is used over 40 times in this letter to demonstrate positional truth. In this section alone, the “en formula” is used fourteen times.

We will come back to the prepositional phrase *before the foundation of the world*.

This is an infinitive verb that supports the main verb. “To be” indicates exactly what is says. He chose us to be....

What this does not say is, “He chose us to be In Him.”

The direct object in Greek will be in the accusative grammatical structure. English sentence structure would determine the direct object by the placement in the sentence. In Greek, the form of the word determines what or who receives the action.

In verse 4, there are four words in the accusative: us (2x), holy, blameless. Holy and blameless are adjectives for the direct object “us.”

If we were to retranslate this verse using the standard English sentence structure it would say this:

“He chose us to be holy and blameless in His sight, in Him, before the foundation of the world.”

Strangely, most people emphasize the prepositional phrase in this passage, answering when. But there is little emphasis placed on the what or the positional statement. So, we are going to focus on the statement at this point.

He chose us to be holy and blameless in His sight.

Holy is “ἅγιος hagios;” this should sound familiar as it is used in verse 1. What word is “ἅγιος hagios?” It is the word *saints*. The only difference is that one is in the accusative, and the other is in the dative. “To the holy ones, he chose us to be holy.” It is a statement of address followed by a statement of how we got that way.

Blameless is “ἄμωμος amōmos.” This is an alpha negative of the word blemish; figuratively, this means without fault or not being able to be blamed. As stated, this is an adjective. In the Greek Septuagint, this word was used to designate the absence of anything amiss in something intended for sacrifice, of anything which would render it unworthy to be offered.

This word is used for Jesus Christ (Hebrews 9:14; 1 Peter 1:19). It is also used in Ephesians:

Jesus Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for the church so that He would make it holy having cleansed it by the washing of the water by means of the word so that he would present it to Himself the glorious church not having spot or wrinkle or of any such things but so that it would be holy and blameless (Ephesians 5:27).

Philippians 2:14-16; Jude 1:24

Are there passages and synonyms that indicate that we should act holy and walk blamelessly? Absolutely! But what we must understand is that those passages indicate that we act in accordance with our declaration. In those passages, the behavior is holy and blameless before men. Men do not declare us holy and blameless positionally, but man can determine if our behavior is holy and blameless.

In Ephesians 1:4, before whom are we holy and blameless? In His sight.

What did God use to get us to that position? In love

How did we become holy and blameless in His sight? In Him (Philippians 3:9)

Verse 5, in the NASB, looks like a new sentence, but the first word is a participle, *having predestined us*. This is the Greek word “προορίζω proorizō,” a compound word that means “before” and “to designate.”

This participle has a direct object, us. And four prepositional phrases follow:

“eis” adoption

“dia” Jesus Christ

“eis” Him

“kata” the kind intention of His will

“eis” indicates “into” or “unto.” It can have some nuances, but this is the best place to begin unless the text determines otherwise. The preordination of believers is to be adopted. Adoption is a result of being saved (Romans 8:15-17; Galatians 4:4-6).

“dia” with the genitive “Jesus Christ” indicates means. Jesus Christ is the means for our adoption.

“eis” Him indicates what this was for — “unto Him.” He chose us for Himself.

“kata” is properly translated “according to,” indicating the referent point. Why did God do all this? Because God’s desire (will) is good intentions. This is all in accordance with God’s good intentions.

Verse 6 praises the glory of His grace; in that grace, He graced us in the one having been loved.

Theological Impact of verses 4-6

The choosing and supplemental pre-determined plan of God are the believers’ positional benefits, the spiritual proclamations of what believers have, being in Christ. This section has two main points of emphasis.

1) Who we are in Him (holy, blameless, adoption)

This continues throughout the passage as more information is revealed as to who we are, what we have, and what we will obtain by the good proclamation of spiritual things.

2) The selection and predetermined plan of God for believers

Why is this emphasized, especially the fact that this choice is made before the foundation of the world? That is understood in the purpose of the letter. To ensure all believers that they have a special designation in the body of Christ and in the current administration. We are all part of what God uses to make known His manifold wisdom (3:6-11).