

ACCEPTED IN THE BELOVED

EPHESIANS 1:3-7 • TV233A

A television broadcast sermon delivered
SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 11TH, 1984

By
HENRY T. MAHAN

Transcribed, edited and published
APRIL 1, 2011

HENRY T. MAHAN TAPE LIBRARY
Zebulon Baptist Church
6088 Zebulon Highway
Pikeville, KY 41501

Ephesians 1:3-7

“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.”

I’m going to bring a message today on the subject: salvation is of the Lord. The title for the message is, **“Accepted in the Beloved.”**

This is written in the **Book of Jonah Chapter 2:9** and again, in the **Book of Psalms**. David said; *“Salvation of the righteous is of the Lord.”*

Salvation is a miracle of God’s love and a miracle of God’s grace and wisdom. The hymn writers put it this way:

**“It took a miracle to put the stars in space
It took a miracle to hang the world in place.
But when God saved my soul
When God cleansed and made me whole
It took a miracle of His love and His grace.”**

“*Salvation is of the Lord.*” Charles Spurgeon said in a message that he preached over a hundred years ago; salvation is of the Lord in its origination; God planned it. Salvation is of the Lord in its execution; God carried it out in sending His Son into the world to be our redeemer. Salvation is of the Lord in its application; God revealed His Son in us. Salvation is of the Lord in its sustaining power; “*we are kept by the power of God through faith.*” Salvation is of the Lord in its ultimate perfection. Spurgeon said, “Emblazed across the sky throughout eternity will be these words; glory to God, salvation is of the Lord.”

I’m not going to take the time to point out all the foolishness and complete folly of what most preachers and churches call “salvation.” This is presumption that is associated with walking to the front of the church.

Salvation is not a physical move; it is coming to Christ in the heart. It is not coming to the front of a church, to an altar, or to a mourner’s bench. Salvation is not walking to the front of the church or responding to altar calls at all.

Salvation is not praying the sinner’s prayer or making a decision. I’m not going to point those things out. I think that most of you see the folly in all of these physical moves which are called “salvation.”

What I want to do today is turn to the **Book of Ephesians**. This is one of the Apostle Paul’s epistles, the epistle to the **Ephesians**. I want you to turn with me to **chapter 1**. I wish very much for you to learn something about this miracle of redemption.

If you really and sincerely in your heart want to know how God saves sinners and who it is who saves sinners and how sinners are saved, then listen to what He has to say about salvation and redemption.

If you really want to know, then let’s lay our traditions and our prejudices aside and come to the Word of God with an open heart. Let’s come with a hungry heart, with a willing heart, and listen to what He has to say about salvation and redemption.

In **Ephesians chapter 1**; I want you to see what the apostle Paul writes about the great work of the divine trinity, God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The Lord our God is one God. He reveals Himself definitely as the, “*Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit.*”

I want you to see in the words of Paul, the great work of the blessed trinity, in the redemption of a sinner. You may draw your own conclusions. I will just read the Scripture and make a comment

or two. When we come to the end of this message we will see what you believe about this matter of salvation; *“salvation is of the Lord.”*

Let’s turn to **Ephesians 1:3** you have it there in your Bible. We will skip the salutation. Here in **verse 3**, Paul says this; *“God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ.”*

God the Father is the moving cause of salvation. He is the moving cause because it says; *“God the Father blessed us;”* He blessed us. He is the source; He is the fountain; He is the giver; He is the designer; He is the one that purposed this whole affair.

He, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, hath blessed us. He is the fountain of all mercy, *“every good gift and every perfect gift cometh from God and cometh down from the Father.”*

Do you see that? He blessed us and the Father blessed us. This is the supreme blessing. This is the extreme and great blessing. *“He has blessed us with all spiritual blessings.”* These spiritual blessings come together as one blessing, all spiritual blessings.

We are not talking here of fleshly, materialistic things such as cars, jobs, homes, radio, television, boats, family or condominiums. I’m not talking about that foolishness that will all fade away with the passing of years. These will all decay by the time you get them.

I’m talking about spiritual blessings, eternal life, and eternal love. I’m talking about pardon and forgiveness of sin. I’m talking about redemption, righteousness, resurrection and acceptance with God; *“He has blessed us with all spiritual blessings,”* all of them.

In Christ we have *“wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.”* This is all that a sinner needs, all that God commands, and all that the Law requires. *“He has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies.”*

These spiritual blessings are in heavenly places, not on this earth. These spiritual blessings are, literally, in His presence. That is where Christ went to offer His blood, *“not into the holy place made with hands but into heaven itself.”*

That is where our forerunner has entered, not in a temple upon this earth, but behind, within the veil. That is where Christ is; that is where He is seated, *“at the right hand of God.”*

All of these blessings, these spiritual blessings, are ours in Christ, in the heavenlies. They are already sealed, already perfected, and as the Scripture says, *“already laid up for you.”*

These blessings are *“undefiled and fade not away, reserved in heaven for you who are kept by the power of God.”* Do you see that?

The moving cause of all mercy, the fountain of all grace, the giver of every gift which is worth having, is the Father; *“He hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies”* in Christ. I will work on that in just a moment.

Look at **verse 4 of Ephesians 1**; *“According as He hath chosen us in Christ before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and without blame before Him.”* God blessed us; He blessed us in Christ *“with all spiritual blessings.”*

He blessed us because He chose to bless us and He chose us to be blessed. We didn’t choose Him; He chose us. Didn’t our Lord say that to His beloved twelve? He said one day to them; *“You didn’t choose me; I chose you.”* We didn’t love Him; He loved us. *“Herein is love; not that we love God.”*

I can’t brag about loving God or how much I love God. I sure can rejoice in His love for me. He loved me; *“Herein is love, not that we loved God but He loved us and gave His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.”* We didn’t call on Him; He called us.

The hymn writer said this:

**“Tis not that I did choose Thee
For Lord that could not be
This heart of mine would still refuse Thee
But Thou hast chosen me.”**

“He blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies,” in Christ according as He chose us. He chose us in Christ; He is the firstborn. Someone said, “Christ be my first elect, God said, and then chose His people in their head.”

He chose us not because we were holy; He chose us that we should be holy. He chose us that we should be delivered from sin and that we should be righteous. He chose us in Christ in order that *“we might be holy.”*

When did He choose us? He chose us *“before the world began, before the foundation of the world.”* The Scripture says, *“Christ is the same, yesterday, today, and forever.”*

He said, *“I am the Lord; I change not.”* God never changes. God is unchangeable. *“Known unto God are all His works from the beginning. He declareth the end from the beginning.”*

Let me ask you three, simple, questions:

First of all: Did you choose God or did He choose you? Will you answer this according to the Scriptures? You will have to say, “Well preacher; He chose me.” This is what the Word of God says; *“He chose me.”* Why did He choose me? The reason has to be in Himself. *“He chose me.”*

Secondly: When did God choose you? Someone might answer that question by saying; “When we believed.” This is not what the Word of God says. The Scripture says; *“He chose us before the foundation of the world.”*

Paul says in **2nd Thessalonians**; *“God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the spirit and belief of the truth.”* God chose us *“before the world began.”*

Thirdly: God chose you and He chose you back in the beginning. Why did he choose you? Why you and why me? Why did He pass by thousands, yea, millions, and set His affection on us? Why did He choose us?

The Scripture says; *“He chose us because it seemed good in His sight. Even so, Father; it seemed good in Thy sight according to the good pleasure of His own will.”*

You, I, and all people, need to make a study of God’s everlasting Covenant. That Great Shepherd of the sheep that God brought forth, the Lord Jesus Christ, through the blood of the everlasting Covenant, is the same Covenant in which David rejoiced on his death bed. He said, *“This is all my salvation and all my desire.”* God entered a Covenant with His Son in reference to me and that is my hope. God chose me.

Notice this in **verse 5**: (**Verse 5** is actually a continuation of **verse 4**); *“According as He chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world, He chose us that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestinated us, to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself.”*

The foundation of all spiritual blessings is the love of God. God sent His Son because He loved the world. God Almighty gave His Son to die for us because *“He commended His love toward us.”*

Christ came and suffered and bled and died for us because He loved us. *“Having loved His own, He loved them unto the end.”* He loved them; this is the love of God:

**“How rich, how pure, how measureless how strong
It shall forever more endure the saints and angel’s song,**

**Could we with ink the ocean fill?
And were the skies of parchment made
Where every stalk on earth a quill
And every man a scribe by trade.**

**To write the love of God above
Would drain that ocean dry
Nor could the scroll contain the whole
Though stretched from sky to sky.”**

It's in love; it's love, not your love for God, but God's love for you.

It is not because you were holy but that in order that you might be holy. God predestinated us to be His children. My friends; the word "*predestination*" is used four times in the Bible, only four times. It is used twice, here, in **chapter 1 of Ephesians** and it is used twice in **Romans chapter 8**.

Each and every time it is used in the Word of God it has to do with the same thing; it has to do with what God will make of His elect. "*We are predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son. We are predestinated to the adoption of children.*"

We are predestinated to be like Jesus Christ, children of God. He has determined from all eternity that those whom He saves and those for whom Christ died, He has chosen the means, the way and the end of their salvation.

God has determined all things that will finally bring those people to His presence to be conformed perfectly to the image of His Son Jesus Christ. This is what predestination is.

Election has to do with people. Predestination has to do with the means of making those people like Christ. God has chartered the course. God has planned the path. Almighty God has set forth the way in which that person is going to come and be like Christ.

He predetermined your destination. Your destination has been determined prior to the beginning of the world. God has determined it.

You see; Almighty God ordained Joseph to be king of Egypt. Do you understand that? Joseph is going to be king of Egypt. Before Joseph was born, Almighty God determined that Joseph would be king of Egypt.

Before Joseph was ever born into his family or ever had the coat of many colors, before he had the dream, before he ran into the wrath of his brothers, he was going to be the king of Egypt. The power of God brought him to that throne.

God brought him to that throne the way that you read it in the Scriptures; He was born to his father. He was one of his favorite sons. His brothers were jealous of him. His father gave him a beautiful coat and he came out into the field that day. "*His brother's wrath was kindled against him*" because of the dreams he had.

They cast him into a pit and sold him as a slave. He went down to Egypt and went down to Potiphar's house. He was finally in jail. He met the baker and the butcher. He wound up in the castle. He interpreted the dream and wound up on the throne.

Was this an accident or was this by chance? No! It is God who predestinated these events. That is the way that Israel came to be in Egypt because Joseph was there. Joseph was king and God brought him there by predestination.

You might call all of these events happenings, chance, or luck. You can call them anything that you want to; it doesn't matter. *"God in love has predestinated us to be conformed to the image of His Son."*

Look at **verse 6**: This is all done *"to the praise of the glory of His grace."* He loved us; He chose us, He predetermined and predestinated us to be children. He called us and gave us all these blessings that we might receive all His mercy.

He did it for His own glory. The Scripture says, *"To the praise of the glory of His grace; he that glorieth, let Him glory in the Lord."* God will share His glory with no man.

This is all *"to the praise of the glory of His grace,"* He has made sinners like you and me to be *"accepted in the beloved."* All the crowns will be at His feet. All the glory will be His and all the praise will be His.

All the anthems in His name will be sung because He did it all from first to last. God the Father be praised for His mercy to us in Christ.

In the next **six verses in Ephesians Chapter 1, beginning with verse 7 and the next six verses**; the apostle Paul talks about the work of the Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Father chose us and the Father *"predestinated us to be like Christ."* The Father *"accepted us in the beloved."*

In **verse 7** it says this, in talking about Christ and who is *"accepted in the beloved."* *"In whom, (in Christ), we have redemption."* We have redemption in Christ; redemption is not in the church but it is in Christ.

Redemption is not in the waters of baptism but is in Christ. Redemption is not in your merit or in the law but is in Christ. We have redemption in Christ through His blood. *"His blood maketh atonement for the soul."*

"His blood cleanseth us from all sin." His blood redeems us. *"We have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace."*

We don't have redemption according to what we deserve. We don't deserve anything but the wages of sin. It is not according to the way we work and serve the Lord; it is *"according to the riches of His grace."*

Did you notice how many times since I have been reading this first chapter the term *"in Christ?"* It says, He blessed us *"in Christ."* He chose us *"in Christ."* He accepted us *"in Christ."* We have redemption *"in Christ."* Redemption is in Christ.

Jesus Christ, God's Son, the God-man, came into this world as our representative. *"He was made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were born under the law."* As a man, (as the God-man, the perfect man); He fulfilled all righteousness.

You see; *"By one man's (Adam) disobedience; we were made sinners."* We were not just put on probation. We were not put on trial; *"we were made sinners."* Even so, *"By the obedience of one (the perfect man, the God-man, the Son of Man and Son of God); we were made righteous."*

The God-man went to the tree; Calvary's cross, and died for our sins. There, *"He was wounded for our transgressions. He was bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement of our peace (was literally), laid upon Him and by His stripes we are healed."*

We have redemption; not that we are going to have it, but we do have it. It is done; *"the great transaction is done and I am my Lord's and He is mine."* He bought me and He redeemed me. I have redemption through His blood.

I have the forgiveness of sins. He forgave us; look at **verse 9**, *"And He made known unto us the mystery of God's will."*

You cannot know God except in Christ. You can't know God except as you know Christ. They said, *"Show us the Father."* He said, *"Have I been so long time with you and you don't know me? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father."*

This is the work of the Son in redemption; the Father chose us. The Father made the Covenant. The Father predestinated what we would be and the Father *"accepted us in the beloved."*

It is in the Beloved that we are redeemed. It is in the Beloved that we have forgiveness of sin. It is in the Beloved that we know God, that the mystery of God's will and the mystery of God's character, holiness, and justice are revealed to us.

"He hath made known unto us the mystery of God's will according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself that in the dispensation of the fullness of time; He might gather together in one, all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in Him."

Read **verse 10**; note carefully; (this is good); *"In Christ we have obtained an inheritance."*

People talk about their inheritance and their reward. They talk about going to heaven and about entering their reward. Our inheritance is in Christ and in Christ we have obtained it. We have received it freely.

"He who knew no sin was made sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." *"In Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily and you are complete in Him;"* *being predestinated according to His purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will,"* which He purposed in Himself.

Salvation is no accident. Did you hear that word “*purpose?*” God said, “*I have purposed it; I will do it. I have spoken it; I will bring it to pass. He worketh all things after His own council of his own will and purpose.*”

Here is a familiar Scripture; “*We know that all things work together for good to them who love God, to them who are called according to His purpose: Who worketh all things after the council of His own will.*”

Who’s will? Is it my will or your will? No; it is God’s will! “*It is not of him that willeth nor of him that runneth, it is of God that showeth mercy. To as many as received Christ, to them gave He the power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name, which were born, not of the will of the flesh, not of the will of man, but born of the will of God.*”

Look at **verse 12**; all the way through you will see this; “*That we should be to the praise of the glory of His grace who first trusted in Christ.*” This theme runs throughout this first chapter and throughout the Word of God; God will be glorified.

In our day of religion we are glorifying everything and everybody in every way but not in God Almighty. God will be glorified. You see; “*He chose us to the praise of His glory.*” Christ died for us “*that we should be to the praise of His glory.*”

Look at **verse 13**: “*In whom, in Christ, you trusted, (you believed), after you heard the word of truth, the Gospel of your salvation.*”

What did you hear? You heard the truth about God. You heard the truth about yourself. You heard the truth about sin. You heard the truth about Christ. You heard the truth about His redemptive work and you believed that truth.

“*In whom also after you believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, to the praise of the glory of His grace.*” There is the divine Trinity; the Father chose us; the Father predestinated us; the Father called us and accepted us.

The Son redeemed us and the Son enlightened us. The Son enriched us and the Holy Ghost brought the Gospel to these dumb, dead, hearts, and gave us ears to hear and hearts to believe. When we believe, He seals us in God. We are sealed forever.

All of it is “*To the praise of the glory of His grace!*”