



NEW TESTAMENT • LESSON 63

CHOSEN BEFORE THE WORLD BEGAN

God's salvation was planned before the world began.



MONDAY

THE STORY: EPHESIANS 1:1-6

Our salvation in Christ was always God's plan. Following Paul's greeting, the first substantial paragraph (Ephesians 1:3-10) is actually one long continuous sentence of praise that celebrates the plan and accomplishment of God in redemption through Christ. We learn some mind-bending truths in Paul's praise of God. We learn that God knew us before we were born; that He chose us in Christ before we were born; that He chose us to be adopted as sons through Jesus Christ; and that all this was according to God's pleasure and will. God was not surprised by the fall of Adam; He knew Adam would fall. God always planned for man's redemption to be through Jesus.

This truth can be very confusing because it seems that when the gospel is presented to us, we must choose to believe. That is true. To be saved, all men must choose to believe in God's saving plan. And yet, in the mystery of God, before we were born, or able to do any choosing, God chose us. God did not choose us based on our works, or His anticipation that we would choose him. God chose us according to His pleasure; that is, God firmly decided, according to His delight, that He would save sinners by the work of Christ!

TALK ABOUT IT:

Did God know us before we were born? (Yes, God knew us before we were born.)

What did God plan to do before we were born? (God planned to save sinners through the death of His Son, Jesus, and adopt them as sons and daughters into His family.)

Why did God do this? (First, it was God's will. God decided on salvation and just how it would be accomplished. It was His plan. Second, Paul tells us that God did this according to His pleasure. The Bible tells us that God sent Jesus out of love for us.)

PRAY:

Praise God for His qualities – He knows all things, controls all things, and is able to accomplish His plan. He is holy, wonderful, full of mercy, and all-powerful. Take time to exalt God just as Paul did in the opening of his letter to the Ephesians.



TUESDAY

THE STORY: EPHESIANS 1: 7-12

Christ's sacrifice was always God's plan. God didn't scramble to come up with a plan after Adam and Eve sinned. He wasn't wondering what He would do next. God never said, "Oh, no! Adam and Eve disobeyed - now what am I going to do?" Even before the fall of Adam and Eve, God's plan to restore fallen man and bring all things together was to sacrifice His Son. Each of God's children was chosen in Christ as part of God's plan. God chose the exact time for Jesus' birth and arranged for it to be foretold by the prophets and even symbolized through the sacrifices He instituted.

TALK ABOUT IT:

How did God plan to save fallen men? (God planned to send His Son, Jesus, to die on the cross for the sins of His people. God's plan was that Jesus would suffer and die in our place. We in turn would be called to trust in Christ Jesus for our salvation. All who believe in Jesus will be saved. All those whom God called will believe.)

Why does God choose to save some to be His children? (God chooses to save sinners because He loves them and it is His pleasure to do so.)

PRAY:

Thank God for His kindness in saving sinners and for sending His Son, Jesus, to die on the cross for us. Ask God to open the eyes of every member of your family to the truth of the gospel that they might believe.



WEDNESDAY
WHERE IS THE GOSPEL?

THE STORY: EPHESIANS 1:13,14

We, who were chosen in Christ before the world began, were included in Christ when we heard the gospel and believed. Though we are chosen, we are yet sinners until the appointed time where we hear and believe. The gospel is the message of salvation and is the power of our salvation. We hear it and believe. At the moment of salvation, God places His Spirit in us as a deposit and a guarantee of our full redemption, which will be experienced when sin will be removed and our sinful bodies will be changed into glorified bodies.

In Ephesians 1:7 we read, "In him (Christ) we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace." This is the heart of the gospel. It is Christ's shed blood on the cross is the foundation of the forgiveness of sins for all those who "heard the word of truth, of the gospel of your salvation and believed in Him" (Ephesians 1:13).

Paul's introduction to the Book of Ephesians is a repetition of the basic facts of the good news. To this he adds that God's plan for us individually was known in the mind of God even before the foundation of the world (Ephesians 1:4).

TALK ABOUT IT:

What part does the gospel play in our salvation? (The gospel message is what we believe and place our trust in to be saved.)

Who comes to dwell in us when we are saved? (God places His Holy Spirit in us.)

Can Christians feel or sense that the Holy Spirit is in them? (Yes, that is why the Holy Spirit is a deposit and guarantee. If we could not sense the presence of the Spirit in our lives, there would be no way to have a guarantee. The Holy Spirit is the one who assures us that we are his sons and daughters; He is the one who excites affections for God and enables us to say no to sin; He is the one who helps us remember the Word and works of Christ. The Holy Spirit is to be an experienced reality in the life of the true Christian.)

PRAY:

Pray that God would save each person in your family and that He would place His Spirit in your hearts that you might know with all certainty that you will one day go to heaven and be with God forever.



THURSDAY

THE STORY: EPHESIANS 1:15-23

God's plan of salvation evokes thanksgiving and prayer. Every time we hear that someone has believed in Jesus Christ, we should rejoice in the same way Paul rejoiced over the salvation of the Ephesians. Paul's prayer also helps us know what we can pray for in our own lives. We should ask God to help us know

Him better through the Spirit, that our hearts might be enlightened to see our great inheritance, and that we might know the great power made available to all believers.

TALK ABOUT IT:

What do Paul’s prayers tell us about how we grow as Christians? (We don’t understand all about God when we become Christians. We grow in our faith and in our understanding of Him. There is always more to learn. Since God’s power and knowledge are infinite [never ending], we will spend all of eternity learning and experiencing more of God and we will never run out of more things to learn about and experience.)

PRAY:

Take time to pray for the same things Paul prayed for.



**FRIDAY
ON THE ROAD TO EMMAUS**

THE STORY: PSALM 45:1,2

Although this psalm, used at weddings, may have been used to describe earthly kings, Jesus is the only most excellent of men that God has blessed forever. Connecting Psalm 45:2 to Jesus, Luke records in his Gospel (Luke 4:22) that after Jesus spoke at the synagogue, the people “all spoke well of Him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his lips.” Later verses of this psalm are also attributed to Christ in the Book of Hebrews. (Psalm 45:6,7 is quoted in Hebrews 1:8,9.)

TALK ABOUT IT:

What words help us know that only Jesus could be the one described by these verses? (It is describing a king who is the most excellent of men that God has blessed forever. Only Jesus fits that description.)

The writer of this psalm introduces the psalm by saying that his heart is stirred by a noble theme and that this psalm is actually the work of a skillful writer. Why is this true? (The writer, though he may not have realized it, was not just writing a song – he was writing Scripture. He was not just writing about a king, but the King of Kings. The stirring to write was the activity of the Holy Spirit.)

PRAY:

Thank God for the wonderful way He used men to write Scripture and provide us with His words.