

## Lesson Three

# Chosen in Christ

*Predestination*, pp. 25-33

### Goal

To see how Paul treats the doctrine of election in his letter to the Ephesians, so that we may see how our whole salvation is “in Christ.”

### Introduction

- People often receive honors and awards. They are chosen to enjoy the limelight of public attention. They are chosen because of certain accomplishments or because they have some quality that others admire. How does this kind of “choosing” differ from God’s choosing us to come to faith?

### We have been elected in Christ

*Ephesians 1:3* Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.

- Why can it be said that “in Christ” we truly have “every spiritual blessing”?

*Ephesians 1:4-6* For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will—to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves.

Here Saint Paul uses a different word to describe God’s choosing us to come to faith, but the meaning is similar. The word he uses here contains the picture of picking out some from a large number. We have been picked to believe in Christ and obtain eternal life.

- What do the expressions “in him,” “through Jesus Christ,” and “in the One he loves” tell us about the relation of Christ and our predestination?

*Psalm 51:5 Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.*

- Think back to lesson one and the discussion about the teaching of original sin and total depravity. Why is it important for us to understand this teaching if we are to understand the gracious nature of God's election?

*Ephesians 1:4 He chose us in him before the creation of the world.*

- The Bible tells us we were chosen in Christ before the creation of the world, a fact also brought out in 2 Timothy 1:9: “[God] has saved us and called us to a holy life. . . . This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time.” How does this reinforce the teaching that we are saved only by grace?
- When in time did God adopt us into his family?

*1 Peter 1:20 He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake.*

- According to 1 Peter 1:20, what else besides our election happened before the creation of the world?

*Ephesians 1:4 He chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight.*

- What is all included in the phrase “holy and blameless”?

*2 Thessalonians 2:13 But we ought always to thank God for you, brothers loved by the Lord, because from the beginning God chose you to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth.*

- Some wonder, Am I saved by election, or am I saved by faith? What light does 2 Thessalonians 2:13 shed on this?

*Ephesians 1:4,5 In love he predestined us.*

- When we discuss predestination, why should we always stress God's love?

*Ephesians 1:5,6* He predestined us . . . to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves.

- What interesting phenomenon takes place by our election?

***Read Ephesians 1:11-14***

- What further guarantee does God give to his elect?

## **Summary**

In his letter to the Ephesians, the apostle Paul describes our election as being in Christ and as taking place in eternity. Before the world was created, God picked us out of the world's population to be followers of Jesus Christ and heirs of heaven. Holiness is needed for heaven. So God arranged through Christ to have us be "blameless in his sight." We are called to be new people! In love he adopted us as his sons through Holy Baptism. By joining us to his beloved Son, God demonstrated his grace and gave all a reason to praise him.

## **During the week**

Review this lesson by reading *Predestination*, pages 25-33. Or, look ahead to the next lesson by reading pages 35-47.