

## ***Glorious planning for God's own*** (Ephesians 1:5–6)

When God chose before creation a people for Himself, He did so with the predetermined plan to adopt them into His family. Like our own adoptions which involve more than a natural birth, there is much involved in God's plan of adoption and it reveals His glorious gracious nature. The result is and should be praise.

### **I. *God planned for the privilege of those He chose.***

“He predestined us to adoption *as sons* through Jesus Christ to Himself.”

1. “*Adoption as sons*” when culturally understood emphasizes the new legally recognized relationship that adopted sons had in the Roman/Greek culture. When applied to believers, it gives an equal spiritual status to believers irrespective of gender.
  - Those adopted becomes heirs, and believers become co-heirs with Christ.
  - Those adopted gain a father, and believers gain a loving, heavenly Father, freeing them from fear and drawing them to God (Romans 8:12–30).
  - Those adopted by God receive the Spirit of God into their hearts (Galatians 4:5–6), more than any earthly adoption can even parallel.
2. “*Through Jesus Christ*”, God has redeemed those under the law and therefore “through Jesus Christ” we receive adoption as sons (Galatians 4:4–5). By His sinless death Jesus Christ paid the price to free us from the slavery of sin.
3. “*To Himself*” (“his sons” in the NIV) emphasizes the special relationship with God which adoption creates for us. You have been brought to Him and now belong with Him.

### **II. *God planned with joyful, sovereign purpose for those He chose.***

“He predestined us for adoption ... according to the good pleasure of His will.”

1. *God felt no regret in planning our adoption, but pleasure*, even in the face of the great cost to God, even in the face of our rebellious condition.
2. *God was under no obligation, but acted by His free choice*. There was nothing lacking in God which needed to be satisfied through creation and the adoption of His chosen ones. There was nothing outside of God forcing Him to act. People believe because He draws them (John 6:44). He opens and shuts opportunities. He opens hearts. God chooses by His free choice.
3. *God did not have to reckon with chance events, but made careful determination*. His will was determinative (cf. 1:11). Nothing confronts God unexpected or unresolvable.

You can rest in God's determination to adopt you. You need not work to get adopted, nor earn your way to stay adopted. We live worthy of our adoption because it is right, good, and the response which should become more and more natural.

### **III. *God planned giving freely to those He chose.***

1. *In Christ, the Beloved, God has freely given us grace*.
  - ‘Grace’ is God giving freely. For it to be “grace” we can contribute nothing. We need the free gift because we can contribute nothing to our rescue from sin and nothing to bridge the separation from God.
  - In Christ, the Beloved, God has provided what was needed and has given it freely to us.
2. *God chose and adopted, all to the praise of the glory of His grace*, that is, to praise the revelation of this character quality of God, that is, the majestic manifestation of that attribute in God which moves Him to freely give good things to His creation.

Whereas our adoption plans may not progress or turn out as we expect or desire, when God has chosen and predestined to adoption, it always turns out according to His will. His adoption is more than a legal act. With that adoption He gifts to the believer His Spirit, a new life, and a new orientation for living. It is all freely given, to the praise of His glorious grace in Christ.

### ***Questions for further reflection and discussion:***

- What does God's choice and adoption of some say about the status of others with God? What is their most essential need?
- Are you ever tempted to think that you at least partially deserve the good will of God in adopting you or as an adopted child of God? How? How would such an attitude reflect upon the praise due to God's glorious grace?
- What stands out to you in the truth that His plan was according to the good pleasure of His will?