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Chosen in Messiah
1: 4-6

Chosen in Messiah DIG: As you read these opening verses of Ephesians, notice each occurrence of the phrase "in Messiah." What is the significance of being "in Him?" In your own words, describe the blessings in Messiah. How does being adopted by the God of the universe relate to our believing? Who is the "we" mentioned here? What conclusions can you draw from the statement that God chose you before all creation? Who can you tell?

REFLECT: Why did God choose you for His blessings? When were you adopted? What excites you most about your relationship with ADONAI? How do you know that you are chosen? What is special about the fact that God deliberately chose to adopt you into His family? For what reason did God choose to make you a member of His family? How many ways are you "in Messiah?" How does living "in Messiah" affect who you are and how you live?

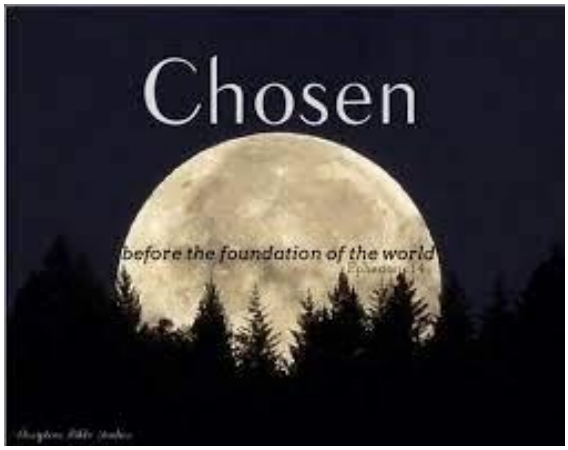
As an adopted child of God, you have a fresh start, a new beginning, a totally new life.

In Messiah, He chose us in love before the creation of the universe to be holy and without defect in His presence (1:4). The plan of God was determined in advance that through Yeshua the Messiah He would adopt us into His own family – in keeping with His pleasure and purpose (1:5). So that we would bring Him praise in accordance with the glory of the grace He gave us through the Beloved One (1:6).

In Messiah (1:4a): Believers possess **every spiritual blessing in heaven (1:3b)** because we are **in Messiah**. This phrase expresses the supreme idea that permeates the entire letter. When we trust **Him** as our **Lord** and **Savior**, we are placed in a marvelous union with **Yeshua Messiah**, so that what is true of **Messiah** becomes true of us, minus **His** deity (see the commentary on **The Life of**

Christ, to see link click Kt – I AM the True Vine). All that **the Lord** has, those **in Messiah** have. **The Spirit himself bears witness with our own spirits that we are children of God; and if we are children, then we are also heirs, heirs of God and joint-heirs with the Messiah (Romans 8:16-17a). Messiah's** riches are our riches, **His** resources are our resources, **His** righteousness is our righteousness, and **His** power is our power. **His** position is our possession: what **He** has, we have. **His** practice is our practice: what **He** does, we do. We are those things and have those things and do those things by the grace of **God**, which never fails to do **His** will in those who trust **Him (First Cor 15:10)**.[57]

In Messiah is the most frequent phrase used in the book of **Ephesians**, and the point is clear: If you're **in Messiah**, you have everything. For example, believers are blessed **in Messiah (1:3)**; **chosen in Messiah (1:4)**; **adopted in Messiah (1:5)**; redeemed and forgiven **in Messiah (1:7)**; participants in **God's** good plan **in Messiah (1:11)**; **glorified in Messiah** and **sealed with the Ruach Ha'Kodesh (1:12-13)**; **made alive in Messiah (2:5-6)**; **created in Messiah (2:10)**; **brought near** to **God in Messiah (2:13)**; **growing in Messiah (2:21)**; **built in Messiah (2:22)**; and **sharers** in **God's promise in Messiah (3:6)**. Get the picture? Everything in the universe is centered **in Messiah,** and we are in **Him (1:10)**.[58]



He chose us before the creation of the universe (1:4b): First among **God's spiritual blessings** is the fact that followers of **Yeshua** have been **chosen** by **ADONAI** in a special way. The word for **chose** here is actually the Greek word *eklego*, meaning to *pick* or *select*. Used here in the middle voice, it means *to choose someone for oneself.* The Bible teaches that **God chose us before the creation of the world**. This implies that **He** did not **chose** others. **This agrees with where**

it is written, "Jacob I loved [chosen], but Esau I hated [not chosen]" (see the commentary on **Romans Cq – The Explanation of Isra'el's Past Paradox**). The Bible also teaches that we have the free will to believe **in Yeshua Messiah** and be saved from our sins. **For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life (John3:16).** Yet, the Bible is just as clear that no person receives **Yeshua Messiah** as **Savior** who has not been **chosen** by **God (Romans 8:29 and 9:11; First Thessalonians 1:3-4; First Peter 1:2). Yeshua** gives both truths in one verse: **Everyone the Father gives Me will come to Me, and whoever comes to Me I will certainly not turn away (John 6:37).**[59] So, is the Bible double-minded? Heaven forbid! Then how can we reconcile these two doctrines?

This is called an antinomy. An antimony in the Bible is two truths, both of which are capable of being demonstrated in Scripture, but cannot be reconciled from a human perspective. In other words, both are true. We don't have to choose one or the other. For example, **the Trinity** is an antinomy. **God is one** (see the commentary on **Deuteronomy Bw – Sh'ma Isra'el**), yet the Bible consistently teaches that there is a plurality in **the Godhead** from **Genesis** to **Revelation**. It is hard to reconcile this in our finite minds. So, picture a house with its roof slanted on two sides. We are standing on one side looking up at the roof and there is a sign that says: **You have the free will to choose or reject Yeshua (Romans 10).** That is election viewed from our standpoint. We can't see the other side of the roof. But **YHVH** stands on the other side of the house, and as **He** looks up and **His** side of the roof says: **Chosen before the creation of the world (Romans 9).** That is election from **God's** standpoint. Both are true, and like **the Trinity**, we must accept it as such.

Isra'el's election is a central doctrine of the TaNaKh as well as present Jewish liturgy. From the days of **Abraham**, **ADONAI** has confirmed that **He** had a particular calling upon **him** and **his** descendants (see the commentary on **Genesis Dt – I Will Bless Those Who Bless You and Whoever Curses You I Will Curse**). The **blessing** read before the chanting of the Torah says, "Who has chosen us from among the peoples." **Sha'ul** applies this concept to the **Ephesian** believers in **Yeshua**, both Jews and Gentiles. It could be said that for the Messianic Jews of **Ephesus** they would appreciate the fact that they were in some way "twice chosen!" The first time was the national call to all **Isra'el**, and the second time was as one called to be a disciple of **Yeshua**.

Although these believers of **Ephesus** had responded to **God's** call, please note that it is **God** who initiated the covenant call (see the commentary on **Jeremiah Eo – The Days are Coming, declares the LORD when I Will Make a New Covenant with the People of Isra'el**). It is not enough to know the fact of this calling **in Messiah**. It will only be effective as each person responds in personal faith to receive that call. This election, unlike **Isra'el's** national call, actually took place **before the creation of the world**. Plus, this calling would result in Messianic beliefs being **holy and without defect**. Of course, believers are not perfect and still struggle with sin in our personal lives. That is why **Paul** does not call us "sinless" but **without defect** because of our response to this calling. The Good News of **Yeshua** is that **YHVH** looks at us, Jew and Gentile, through the work of **His Son**. **He** has us covered![60]

And as Rick Warren relates in his book *The Purpose Driven Life* . . . you are no accident. Your birth was no mistake or mishap, and your life is no fluke of nature. Your parents may not have planned you, but **God** did. **He** was not at all surprised by your birth. In fact, **He** expected it. Long before you were conceived by your parents, you were conceived in the mind of **God**. **He** thought of you first. It is not fate, nor chance, nor luck, nor coincidence that you are breathing at this very moment. You are alive because **God** wanted to **create** you! Not only that, **God** planned every single detail of your body. **He** deliberately **chose** your race, the color of your skin, your hair, and every other feature. **He** custom-made your body just the way **He** wanted it. **He** also determined the natural talents you would possess and the uniqueness of your personality. The Bible says: **For You fashioned my inmost being, You knit me together in my mother's womb. I thank You because I am awesomely made, wonderfully; your works are wonders – I know this very well. My bones were not hidden from you when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of [my mother's womb] (Psalm 139:13-15).**

Because **ADONAI** made you for a reason, **He** also decided *when* you would be born and *how long* you would live. **He** planned the days of your life in advance, choosing the exact time of your birth and death. The Bible declares: **Your eyes could see me as an embryo, but in Your book, all the days [of my life] were already written; my days had been shaped before any of them existed (Psalm 139:16).**

Most amazing, **YHVH** decided how you would be born. Regardless of the circumstances of your birth or who your parents are, **God** had a plan in creating

you. It doesn't matter whether your parents were good, bad, or indifferent. **God** knows that those two individuals possessed exactly the right genetic makeup to **create** the custom "you" **He** had in mind. They had the DNA **the LORD** wanted to make you.

While there are illegitimate parents, there are no illegitimate children. Many children are unplanned by their parents, but they are not unplanned by **God**. **His** purpose took into account human error and every sin. **God** never does anything by accident, and never makes mistakes. **He** has a reason for everything **He creates**. Every plant and every animal was planned by **God**, and every person was designed with a purpose in mind. **God's** motive for creating you was in **His love**. The Bible says: **In Messiah He chose us in love before the creation of the universe to be holy and without defect in His presence (1:4).**

God was thinking of you even *before* **He** made **the universe**. In fact, that's why **He created** it! **ADONAI** designed this planet's environment just so we could live in it. We are the focus of **His love** and the most valuable of all **His** creation. The Bible proclaims: **Having made His decision, He gave birth to us through a Word that can be relied upon, in order that we should be a kind of firstfruits of all that he created (James 1:18).** This is how much **God loves** and values you![61]

The plan of God was determined in advance (1:5a): We may define this as **His** eternal decision, making certain all things that are in **Him** come to pass. There are several analogies which, though necessarily insufficient, may help us to understand this concept. **The plan of God** is like the architect's plans, drawn first in **His** mind and then on paper, according to her intention and design, and only afterward executed in an actual structure. Or **ADONA**I may be thought of as being like an athletic coach who has a carefully conceived game plan which his team seeks to carry out. Or **He** may be likened to a business executive planning The strategy and tactics for his firm. **YHVH** is like the student who carefully plans her schedule of work for the term, so that she is able to do a good job on all her required assignments and to complete them on time.[62]

Some translations use the word **predestined** (Greek: *proorisas*, meaning to *predetermine* or *foreordain*) here, which has led to all sorts of theological debate in both Jewish and Christian circles. **Joesphus, the first century Jewish historian, notes that this was a hotly debated topic within the various sects of Judaism of his day. "As for the Pharisees, they say that certain events are the work of Fate, but not all; as to other events, it depends upon people,**

themselves, as to whether they take place or not. The sect of the Essenes, however, declares that Fate is the mistress of all things and that nothing befalls men unless it is in accordance with her decree. The Sadducees do away with Fate, holding that there is no such thing and that human actions are not achieved in accordance with her decree, but through personal decisions. Thus, humans are responsible for their own thoughtlessness (Antiquities 13:171-173).

Later Christian theology reflected some of these same discussions. An extreme view, called Unconditional Election, believes that **God** makes the determination without any assistance from the person, a concept that seems closely tied to the concept of foreknowledge. While I agree that "**God** does not foresee an action or condition on our part that induces **Him** to save us" **(Romans 3:23)**, I also believe that because of our free will, we have a choice in the matter. Those who believe that we have no choice point to **Romans 9:13** and **Jacob** and **Esau**. While it is undeniable that **Jacob** was **loved (chosen)** and **Esau** was **hated (not chosen)**, I don't believe this applies to salvation in general, but rather through whom would **the Seed of the Messiah** come. **ADONAI chose** that the line of **the Messiah** would come through **Jacob** and not come through the line of **Esau**. In the final analysis, **God's choosing** never cancels or eliminates the necessity for personal faith. If there were no free will to **choose**, then it would appear that **Ha'Shem** is unfair and that we would be no more than spiritual robots. But there are too many bible verses stating that "whoever believes" will find the wonderful gift of redemption. Once again this is an antimony **(1:4b)**. As the Torah says, some **secret things belong to ADONAI (Deuteronomy 29:29).**[63]

To adopt us into His own family (1:5b): The result of **God's** election is our **adoption** into the personal family of **God**. Even those born Jewish, who have a covenant with **God**, must enter into a deeper level of relationship. **Yeshua** even urged a famous rabbi to be born again by **the Spirit of God** (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ Bv – Jesus Teaches Nicodemus**). In Jewish law, an **adopted** child has their original bloodline, but their legal status changes. This concept would apply well to both Jewish and Gentile followers of **Yeshua** in the city of **Ephesus**. People retained their cultural identity, but through the work of **Messiah**, their legal status had changed to **become the** spiritual **children of God (John 1:12b)**.[64] When **adopted**, we are transferred from Satan's family to **God's** family. In addition, we are transferred from slavery to sonship, from being completely cursed to utter shalom. And **adoption** implies our eternal security **in**

Messiah if you look at **ADONAI** as the perfect parent (see **The Life of Christ Ms – The Eternal Security of the Believer**).

To be saved is to have the very life of **God** in our souls, **His** own **Spirit** enlivening our spirits. Human parents can **adopt children** and come to love them every bit as much as they love their natural children. They can give an **adopted** child complete equality in the family life, resources, and inheritance. But no human parent can impart their own distinct nature to an **adopted** child. Yet, that is exactly what **God** miraculously does to every person whom **He** has **chosen** and who has trusted in **Yeshua** out of their own free will. **YHVH** makes them sons and daughters just like **His** own divine **Son**. Believers not only have all of **the Son's** riches and **blessings**, but also all of the **Son's** nature, minus **His** deity.

In accordance with the glory of the grace He gave us (1:6): Why did **YHVH** do all of that for us? Why did **He** want us to be **His children**? We are saved and made **the children of God in accordance with the glory of the grace He gave us.** Above all else, **He** saves and **adopts** us for **His** own **glory**. **The apostle Paul** interceded for **the Thessalonians**, praying **that our God may count you worthy of your calling . . . in order that the name of our Lord Yeshua may be glorified in you, and you in Him (Second Thessalonians 1:11-12).** Even the beasts of the field will glorify **the Lord, Isaiah** tells us **(Isaiah 43:20)**, and **the heavens declare God's glory (Psalm 19:1)**. The only rebels in the universe are fallen angels and fallen mankind. Everything else glorifies its **Creator**. The fallen angels have already been eternally removed from **God's** presence, and those fallen men and women who will not bend the knee to **Yeshua Messiah** will join those fallen angels in that eternal separation.

The plan of **God** chose **the Body of Messiah before the foundation of the universe** in order that no human being could boast, or take that **glory** personally, but that all the **glory** might be **the LORD's**. Salvation is not partly of **God** and partly of man, but entirely of **God** (see **Az – Seated in Messiah**). To guarantee that, every provision and every detail of salvation was accomplished before any human being was ever born or before a planet was formed. This leaves no room for the theory of evolution, which holds that the things that are seen today were made of pre-existing material. The ultimate reason for everything that exists is **the glory of His grace**. That is why, as **God's children**, we should **do** everything – even such mundane things as **eating and drinking** – to **the glory of God (First Corinthians 10:31).**[65]

*Dear Heavenly **Father**, Praise **Your** Awesome **love** to bless me with every **spiritual blessing "in Christ"**! **Your** gracious **love** is so big that **You** promise me. Every **spiritual blessing** that **You** promise is based on being **"in Messiah"**. **His** sacrificial death and resurrection opened the path to heaven. **You chose** the path to be **"in Christ".** The path to heaven is not in any person but only thru the one sinless and spotless **Lamb of God (John 1:29).** All other people died and are still dead. Only **Messiah Yeshua** has conquered/defeated death and only **Messiah Yeshua** was without sin. Before **You created the universe You** knew that mankind could never be good enough to save itself. Since **You** are **holy**, the only way for **You** to fellowship with anyone is if they are **holy** and so **You** planned for **Holy Messiah Yeshua** to bear the sins of mankind. **All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast – all whose names have not been written in the Lamb's book of life, the Lamb who was slain from the creation of the world (Revelation 13:8).** All who choose to **love** and trust **Messiah Yeshua**, get on **His** path of **holiness** by being **adopted** as **God's** children. Thank **You** for my **adoption**, giving me the right to enter **Your holy** heavenly home and live with you eternally! Praise **You** for **Your** Awesome **Love**! I want to thank **You** for **Your love** and **blessings** by **blessing You** back by living our lives in loving obedience, sharing **Your** greatness with others and making time to talk with **You** daily in prayer. In **Messiah Yeshua's holy** name and power of **His** resurrection. Amen*