

“So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir.” (Galatians 4:7 NIV)

“We know, dear brothers and sisters, that God loves you and has chosen you to be His own people.” (I Thessalonians. 1:4 NLT)

So knowing that we are joint-heirs with God’s Son, what has God given as a deposit that guarantees that inheritance? Let’s look at verses 13 and 14 one more time.

“Having believed, you were marked in Him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God’s possession...”

The Holy Spirit is the deposit that guarantees our inheritance. So what does that mean? Well, most of us have made a large purchase that required us to make a deposit on the item. Why was that deposit required? Probably to assure the seller that we would carry through with the rest of the payments. This NIV version tells us that the Holy Spirit is a “deposit.” But let’s look at the King James translation before we leave this subject. It might provide an even better analogy.

“...after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession...” (KJV)

Notice that it says the Holy Spirit is the “earnest” of our inheritance. Did you ever buy a house and have to put down “earnest money”? Well, according to the law “earnest money” is money given by a buyer to a seller to *bind* a contract. That means that God has given the Holy Spirit to those who are His possession — purchased with the blood of His beloved Son — as “earnest” to bind the contract of their inheritance. Earnest is anything that gives pledge, promise or indication of what is to follow and this verse in Ephesians tells us that the Holy Spirit is the *earnest* that seals the contract of the inheritance promised to us as purchased possessions of God.

God predestined a *people* to be saved — and that people is the collective entity that was purchased with the blood of His Son. That people is the Body of Christ. Acts 2:47 tells us that the Lord adds to that Body daily. So those who have not only taken the steps necessary to be a part of — but also remain a part of that chosen people of God are guaranteed an inheritance as joint-heirs with Christ and have the Holy Spirit as earnest. Acts 2:38 explains exactly how to become part of that collective entity — the household of God that is predestined to be saved.

“Peter replied, ‘Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.’” (NIV)

“Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God’s people and members of God’s household,” (Eph. 2:19 NIV)

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DILIGENCE

“We want each of you to show this same diligence to the very end, in order to make your hope sure.” — Hebrews 6:11

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A People of God — Part Two

In the previous issue, we considered the word “people” as it is often used in the Scriptures as opposed to the way we are more accustomed to using that word in our English language. We briefly mentioned Ephesians 1:4-14 as it relates to the belief that God has predestined a *chosen people* but has *not* predestined specific individuals. More specifically, we noted that just as God had a chosen people in the Old Testament, He also has a chosen people in the New Covenant — a people purified “...unto Himself..” (Titus 2:14 KJV). We saw that the people purified unto Himself is the Body of Christ or the church and it is *that Body* that is predestined by God — not specific individuals. We also noted that since it is *by way of Christ* that this collective entity (the Body of Christ) becomes God’s possession, that *chosen people* is “in Christ.” So any individual who wants to be included in that predestined chosen people of God would have to be *in Christ* because *that’s* how that people is purified by God *unto Himself*.

So let’s look at a few verses that point out the necessity of being “in Christ” in order to be a part of that collective entity that God predestined to be saved.

“Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus,” (Romans 8:1 NIV)

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come.” (II Corinthians 5:17 NIV)

“God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.” (II Corinthians 5:21 NIV)

“There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” (Galatians 3:28)

“I was personally unknown to the churches of Judea that are in Christ.” (Galatians 1:22 NIV)

“For through Him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit. Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God’s people and members of God’s household,” (Eph. 2:18-19 NIV)

Before we move on, it might be worth noting that Galatians 1:22 included above could also read “...the churches in Christ of Judea...” So we can again see — especially from these last two verses above that “in Christ” is virtually the same as “in the church” or “in the household of God.” Now, let’s look more

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closely at those verses in Ephesians 1 that we've mentioned several times but have yet to discuss in detail and see how all of this will help us to better grasp their meaning concerning predestination. Let's read all of those verses.

4) *"For He chose us in Him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in His sight. In love 5) He predestined us to be adopted as His sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with His pleasure and will — 6) to the praise of His glorious grace, which He has freely given us in the One He loves. 7) In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace 8) that He lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding. 9) And He made known to us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Christ, 10) to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment — to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ 11) In Him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of Him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of His will, 12) in order that we, who were the first to hope in Christ, might be for the praise of His glory. 13) And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in Him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, 14) who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of His glory"* (NIV)

Let's look at these verses now in context with what we have discussed as to whom it is that is predestined.

Verse 4 — "...He chose us in Him before the creation of the world..."

Who is the "us" spoken of here? To answer that question we need to know to whom is the author of Ephesians speaking? Ephesians 1:1 answers that question.

"Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus:"

So Paul is speaking to faithful Christians who are therefore in Christ. So who is he saying was chosen before the creation of the world? Well, couldn't we enhance this particular part of this verse to read *"anyone who is in Christ was chosen to be saved before the creation of the world..."* or even a more expanded version might read *"if I am one of those who has made the decision to be in Christ, I am a member of the collective entity that was chosen before the creation of the world..."* Did He chose specific individuals? No. He chose the collective entity — the household of God — the Body of Christ. He chose —

"...a people prepared for the Lord." (Luke 1:17)

"...a people belonging to God..." (I Peter 2:9)

"...the people of God..." (I Peter 2:10)

"...a people that are His very own..." (Titus 2:14)

"...the household of God.." (Ephesians 2:19)

The people *"...in Him..."* is the people — or the collective entity that was chosen before the creation of the world.

Verse 5 — "He predestined us to be adopted as His sons through Jesus Christ..."

So if He predestined those *"...in Him..."* what was the plan that would provide a way for *individuals to be able* to be in Him? They would be adopted as His sons through Jesus Christ.

Verse 6 and 7 — "...grace, which He has freely given us in the One He loves. In Him we have redemption through His blood..."

His redemptive grace is available only to those who are "in Him."

Verse 11 — "In Him we were also chosen..."

Again, "in Him" is the criteria for being chosen. Being "in Him" is what provides a special status with God. The people who are God's possession and are adopted *"...through Christ..."* are in Christ and therefore become a part of the one predestined people. They are those who —

have — *"...no condemnation ...in Christ..." (Romans 8:1)*

have become — *"...a new creation..." (II Corinthians 5:17)*

have become — *"...the righteousness of God." (II Corinthians. 5:21)*

and are — *"...one in Christ..." (Galatians 3:28)*

Verse 11 — "...predestined according to the plan of Him..."

God had a plan from the very beginning for a people who would be His own possession (through the blood of His Son) and were therefore predestined.

"Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, ...But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world,..." (I Peter 1:18-20 KJV)

Verse 13 — "...you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation..."

And here's where it all comes together concerning these verses. This verse explains exactly how it is that *we* as individuals, are able to become a part of the collective entity that is predestined. Hearing the Gospel of salvation and acting on our belief in the word of truth is the salvation that puts us into that household of God that is predestined to be saved.

Verse 13 and 14 — "...Having believed, you were marked in Him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession...."

Remember that we noted in the section on verse 4, that Paul was addressing these comments to *"the faithful in Christ."* If we remain faithful, we remain a part of God's own people and are therefore guaranteed an inheritance as joint-heirs with Christ.

"And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ;..."

(Romans 8:17 KJV)