

Ephesians 1:5-10 Past, Present and Future

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[0 : 0 0] Ephesians chapter 1, Ephesians chapter 1, and we're going to read the first 10 verses of the chapter, Ephesians chapter 1, and the first 10 verses.

Tonight we're considering verses 5 through 10 really, or 4b in a sense. That's perhaps where our English verses don't do us that many favours, but it'll be 4b through the end of verse 10.

Or what I call in 5 through 10. Anyway, Ephesians chapter 1, and we're going to read it, verse 1, this is the word of God. Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, to the saints who are in Ephesus and are faithful in Christ Jesus, grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him.

In love, he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace with which he has blessed us in the beloved.

[1 : 2 2] In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished upon us in all wisdom and insight, making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose which he set forth in Christ, as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven, and things on earth.

Amen. This is a reading of God. Let's turn in our Bibles, please, to Exodus chapter 12. Exodus chapter 12, it's the chapter of the Passover, so we've been in Egypt for a little while, the Lord has sent Moses to free his people, Pharaoh has steadfastly refused to let the Israelites go, we've had nine plagues, and we're leading up now to the final plague, the death of the firstborn.

But as we come to Exodus chapter 12, we're reminded that an animal had to be sacrificed, that an animal had to die in order for its blood to be put on the doorpost, on the lintels, and to set the people free, just as we're reminded in Ephesians chapter 1, that indeed Christ is our substitute, that Christ is our sacrifice, that Christ's blood was shed, so that we might go free.

Exodus chapter 12, beginning to read it, verse 1, this is the word of God. The Lord said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, This month shall be for you the beginning of months, it shall be the first month of the year for you.

Tell all the congregation of Israel that on the tenth day of this month, every man shall take a lamb according to their father's houses, a lamb for a household. And if the household is too small for a lamb, then he and his nearest neighbour shall take according to the number of persons, according to what each can eat, you shall make your count for the lamb.

[3 : 1 8] Your lamb shall be without blemish, a year old. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats, and you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month, when the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill their lambs at twilight.

Then they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they eat it. They shall eat the flesh that night, roasted on the fire with unleavened bread and bitter herbs, they shall eat it.

Do not eat any of it raw or boiled in water, but roasted, its head with its legs and its inner parts. And you shall let none of it remain until the morning. Anything that remains until the morning you shall burn.

In this manner you shall eat it with your belt fastened, your sandals on your feet and your staff in your hand. And you shall eat it in haste, it is the Lord's Passover.

For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast, and on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments.

[4 : 19] I am the Lord. The blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt.

This day shall be for you a memorial day, and you shall keep it as a feast to the Lord throughout your generations. As a statute forever you shall keep it as a feast. Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread.

On the first day you shall remove leaven out of your houses. For if anyone eats what is leavened from the first day until the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel. On the first day you shall hold a holy assembly, and on the seventh day a holy assembly.

No work shall be done in those days, but what everyone needs to eat, that alone may be prepared by you. And you shall observe the feast of unleavened bread. For on this very day I brought your hosts out of the land of Egypt.

Therefore you shall observe this day throughout your generations as a statute forever. In the first month, from the fourteenth day of the month at evening, you shall eat unleavened bread until the twenty-first day of the month at evening.

[5 : 26] For seven days no leaven is to be found in your houses. If anyone eats what is leavened, that person will be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he is a sojourner or a native of the land.

You shall eat nothing leavened in all your dwelling places. You shall eat unleavened bread. Then Moses called all the elders of Israel and said to them, Go and select lambs for yourselves according to your clans, and kill the Passover lamb.

Take a bunch of hyssop and dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and touch the lintel and the two doorposts with the blood that is in the basin. None of you shall go out of the door of his house until the morning. For the Lord will pass through to strike the Egyptians, and when he sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the Lord will pass over the door, and will not allow the destroyer to enter your houses to strike you.

You shall observe this right as a statute for you and for your sons forever. And when you come to the land that the Lord will give you, as he has promised, you shall keep this service. And when your children say to you, What do you mean by this service?

You shall say, It is the sacrifice of the Lord's Passover. For he passed over the houses of the people of Israel in Egypt, when he struck the Egyptians but spared our houses. And the people bowed their heads and worshipped.

[6 : 40] Then the people of Israel went and did so as the Lord had commanded Moses and Aaron, so they did. At midnight, the Lord struck down all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sat on his throne, to the firstborn of the captive who was in the dungeon, and all the firstborn of the livestock.

And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he and all his servants, and all the Egyptians, and there was a great cry in Egypt.

For there was not a house where someone was not dead. Then he summoned Moses and Aaron by night and said, Up, go out from among my people, both you and the people of Israel, and go, serve the Lord as you have said.

Take your flocks and your herds, as you have said, and be gone, and bless me also. Amen. This is the reading of God's inspired, inerrant word.

Let us turn to the Lord. Let's turn then please to this section in Ephesians. Ephesians chapter 1, and verses 5 through 10. Well, as I said, verse 4b really, I suppose, through verse 10.

[7 : 52] We're going to consider these five verses or so. This evening, one of the things that we committed to do whenever we first had children was that we were going to save a little bit each month for them, so that whenever they turned 18, they would have a little pot of money to do with whatever they chose.

I mean, it's not a vast sum of money that they'll have, but it's a little bit. But one of the things, one of the stipulations that was placed on us as we opened the account, was that it couldn't be touched until the children turned 18, that we are sort of trustees of the account.

The children have this pot of money sitting there, but it's no good to them. If they have expenses now, they can't touch it. They can't touch it until they turn 18.

It's kept in trust for them until then. And for many of us this evening, that can be how we view our salvation. We can almost view our salvation as, well, we've got our golden ticket to heaven. We've got our ticket. Everything in the future is safe. We know where we're going. We've trusted in Christ. That's all safe. But all the benefits of our salvation come in the future.

[9 : 11] It's something that will be enjoyed one day, but for now, we get on with the muck and the mire of this life. We can view our salvation as having only benefits in the future.

But as Paul writing here to the Ephesian church reminds them, that their salvation has benefits, has begun in the past. They have that assurance of being predestined.

They have that assurance of being adopted in Christ. But he reminds them as well that it has benefits, not only in the past, but in the present.

That they have been redeemed through the blood of Christ. That is what they are in the present age. That is what they are as they live day to day.

And then he reminds them that it has benefits in the future. That one day, all things will be united to Christ. That one day, all things in heaven and on earth will be united in Christ.

[10 : 19] Their salvation has benefits in the past, in the present, and will have benefits in the future. It is under those three headings that we want to look at these five verses this evening.

The past, the present, and the future. So firstly then, we think about the benefits of salvation in the past, in the past. And we see that in verses 5 and 6.

So we remember where we finished last week, this great assurance that we've been blessed with every spiritual blessing in Christ. That we've been chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world.

And then we see how that theme continues this week. That Paul's assured them that they are chosen in Christ. And we read at the end of verse 4 then, in love, he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ.

Now we thought a little bit last week about some of the arguments for and against predestination. Some of the ways people try and argue out of predestination. We don't have time to kind of rehearse those arguments, rehash those arguments this week.

[11 : 26] But we do want to draw some things out of this. We do want to try and encourage ourselves with the benefits of salvation in the past. And the first thing that we notice here is that as Paul writing to this church in Ephesus, what does he remind them of about predestination?

He reminds them that it was in love God predestined us for adoption. It was in love that he predestined us for adoption.

Now notice please, this isn't a response to the love that we had for God.

It wasn't that God kind of looked into the future and said, right, okay, he's going to love me, he's going to love me, she's going to love me, I'll predestine them for adoption. I'll make them my people. No, it's simply an act of love. It's not out of a response to the obedience that we offer to God. It's simply an act of love.

[12 : 32] Oftentimes, predestination can be viewed as kind of an act of a vengeful God. It's as Robert Burns put it, that God sends one to heaven and ten to hell in awe for his own glory.

God's predestination, according to Burns, is really designed to send people to hell, but in order to do that, he has to send some to heaven. It's kind of that way, that people are predestined to hell. But Paul says, no. It was in love that he predestined us. God was under no compulsion to save any of us.

God could have left us where we were in sin and misery and we couldn't have complained. God could have chosen to save none of us. but he didn't.

In love, he predestined us. In love, he chose us. But we also want to draw something else out of that because we're told here that we're predestined.

[13 : 42] We're told here that we are chosen in love. Now even that's a tremendously reassuring thought, isn't it? Because deep down, deep down I know I'm a sinner.

Deep down I know how far short of God's standard I fall. I know how far short of my own standards I fall if I'm honest. But in love, God has chosen me in eternity past.

that in love, God sent Jesus Christ into the world while we were yet sinners. And Christ died for us. My predestination does not depend on my obedience. My continuation in the Christian life does not depend on my obedience. if Jesus Christ died for me while I was yet a sinner, will God reject me now that I'm clothed in the righteousness of Christ?

Now that I'm accepted in Christ? If God did all this, if in love he predestined us, if in love he sent Christ while we were yet sinners, sinners.

[15:09] Will he reject us now that we're clothed in the righteousness of Christ? Of course not. So we're told then, verse 5, that in love he predestined us.

But what are we predestined to? What's the purpose? What are we chosen for? Well, we're chosen, Paul says, for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ.

We are predestined to be adopted, to be chosen as sons of God through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. It's simply breathtaking, isn't it?

It should cause our hearts to sing with love for what God has done for us. We are adopted as sons and daughters of God tonight in Christ.

As most of you probably know, Suzanne's mom fosters children. She takes them as babies, usually keeps them. for a few months in an ideal world, sends them back to their parents.

[16:10] It doesn't always happen. It's not always an ideal world that we live in. And sometimes the children have to be adopted. It's one of the saddest, but yet it's also one of the most wonderful things to see as a young child going off with their new family.

Sad because of the pain that may be caused to their birth parents and from their birth parents. But it's lovely because someone has come to that child and said, you weren't born to me.

I don't care about your history. I don't care about the problems that you have. Out of all the children care, I want you to be mine. when we consider that from God's perspective tonight, out of all the people in the world, he has chosen those of us in Christ to be his children.

That despite all of our sin, despite all of our failure, God chooses us to be his adopted children.

We're brought in. And the thing about being an adopted child is that the child has all the rights and claims of being a full member of that family.

They take the serenity of that family to all intents and purposes. They're part of that family. In Jesus Christ tonight, we can say that we're part of God's family.

[17:41] That we've the right and privileges of being part of the family of God. That we've the right and privileges tonight of being the sons and daughter of God. It's simply breathtaking.

The God who made the universe, the God who set each star in place, the God who spoke and it came to be, the God who made us in our mother's womb, adopts us into his family.

God and God who made it. It's one of the most reassuring things we can think on and I would encourage you to think more on it, our adoption in Christ.

all of this happened, Paul says, according to the purpose of his will. It was what God wanted to do.

It happened according to the purpose of his will. It was what God wanted to do, not what God had to do, not what God was forced to do, not what God's arm was twisted up his back until he did.

[18:46] It was what he wanted to do to bring us to himself. But why?

Oh, we see the answer in verse 6 to the praise of his glorious grace with which he has blessed us in the beloved. It's to show God's kindness. It's to show God's grace.

It's to show God's undeserved, unmerited favor. to show God as a God of love and care and compassion.

So we see the benefits then of salvation in the past, if you like. That from eternity past we have been predestined, that in love we have been predestined to be adopted as sons and daughters of God.

We're adopted to showcase the grace and mercy of God. But secondly then we want to think about the present. What are the benefits of salvation in the present?

[19:53] What's the outworking of our salvation in the present? And we see that in verses 7 and 8. What are the benefits here and now for us in Christ? What does Christ achieve for us in the here and now?

Well Paul says in verse 7 in him we have redemption redemption through his blood. In him in Christ we have redemption. Now we need to understand that.

We need to unpack that phrase a little bit. The word redemption. It's a marketplace term. It means to buy something back to set something free.

I was trying to think of the best way to illustrate this. You may not agree with it but this is what came to mind. If you go into town tomorrow you'll find no shortage of pawn shops.

If you're something valuable you need a little bit of cash in the short term you can pawn your item in. And they give you a little ticket and they say look if you pay this much back within two weeks

then you can have your item back again.

[20 : 57] So two weeks comes. You take the amount of money you take your ticket to the pawn shop and you say right okay I want my item back. In a real sense you've redeemed your item.

You've set it free from the pawn shop. You've redeemed your item. And Paul says here that in Christ we have redemption.

It's in Christ that we've been bought back. It's in Christ that we've been set free. But then maybe the question arises in your head well what are we held captive to?

There's none of us here tonight in bondage as far as I can see. There's none of us physically in chains or handcuffs so what do we need to be set free from? What is it that Christ redeems us, buys us back from?

Well we skip ahead a few words because what else does Paul tell us in verse 7? In him we have redemption through his blood. What does that mean? The forgiveness of our trespasses.

[22 : 03] We have been set free tonight from our trespasses. We have been bought back tonight from our trespasses. It's a tremendously old fashioned word isn't it? It's perhaps a word that we maybe only know from the Lord's prayer.

Or perhaps you know as you go around town you see those building sites there's signs that say no trespassing. Trespassers will be prosecuted. What does it mean?

It means that that's kind of forbidden territory that it's a place that you're not allowed to go. And that's what it means to trespass. It means a wandering off the mark.

It means going off the path and the path here is God's word. So when we're forgiven for our trespasses we're forgiven for wandering off God's path.

For ignoring God and his word. And you see at heart tonight that's what each of us is enslaved to. That's what each of us is held captive by.

[23 : 09] It's our desire to live our own life our own way with no thought for God. But in Christ tonight we can know freedom that in Christ tonight we can be bought back and set back on the right path through his death.

And notice Paul tells us how Christ achieved that redemption in him. We have redemption through his blood. Now if we know anything about the Bible we'll know all about those sacrifices of the Old Testament.

We'll know about the Passover lamb Exodus 12 that we read from. We'll know about all of those sacrifices that we read about in the temple of God. And as you read of those things what strikes you the most is how bloody they were.

That as the Israelites killed the lamb the blood went all over the doorposts. That as they offered the sacrifices in the temple the blood went not everywhere but it was quite a bloody affair.

the blood of the sacrifice was considered its life. And here Paul reminds us that Christ redeemed us, brought us back through his blood, through his sacrifice, by becoming the substitute in our place, by becoming the sacrifice in our place, by shedding his blood, by giving his life as a ransom for many.

[24 : 54] If you're trusting in Jesus as your saviour tonight, if you're looking to him in faith, then you can know that you're redeemed. You can know that you're set free, you can know that the price has been paid.

That's the benefit of salvation in the here and now, if you like, in the everyday muck and mire of life. that we have been set free.

That we're no longer slaves, but sons and daughters. We can have that assurance, that hope, that confidence, not in ourselves, but in Christ who has redeemed us.

All this happened, again, notice verse 7, all this happened according to the riches of his grace. grace. It was grace, quite simply, that caused God to do this.

It was mercy that made God act in the way that he did. It wasn't that we deserved it. It wasn't that we were good enough, but it was God's mercy.

[26 : 05] God God God God continues this theme in verse 8, and it's such a lovely way Paul has of putting it according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished on us.

Which he lavished on us. It speaks to us of the overwhelming grace that is ours. grace. This wasn't a sprinkling of grace.

It wasn't even an adequate amount of grace, but it was lavish grace. This wasn't Aldi grace.

This was Fortnum and Mason grace. It was lavished on us. And that's what was being given to us tonight in Christ.

There can be no greater gift than this. No greater sacrifice can be offered or demanded because in Christ God has lavished grace on us.

[27 : 24] Don't cheapen grace tonight. How can we cheapen grace? We cheapen grace as we say, well, sin doesn't really matter. We cheapen grace as we say, well, everyone's saved, really.

Don't make grace seem like not a big deal. Don't cheapen grace tonight because grace has been lavished on us in the present.

Grace has been lavished on us in Christ. Christ. So we've seen the benefits of our redemption in the past, if you like, that in love we've been predestined, we've seen the benefits of our redemption in the present, that we have redemption through his blood, that we have been lavished with grace. And then finally tonight, thirdly, we want to think about the benefits for the future. The benefits for the future. And we see that in verses 9 and 10.

And we see, as we come to verse 9, we see that Paul begins then to speak about the mystery, making known to us the mystery of his will. This isn't something that can be discovered.

[28 : 44] This isn't something that we can work out if we're intellectually quick enough. It isn't something that if we work hard enough at we'll eventually figure out. No, this is a mystery that has to be revealed to us.

This mystery which Paul tells us was set forth in Christ. And what's that mystery? That he has this plan, ultimately, verse 10, for the fullness of time.

We see this phrase used a couple of times in Paul's letters, probably most famously in Galatians 4.4.

Paul tells us that when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his son, born of a woman, born under the law. Why? To redeem those under the law. What does it mean when Paul speaks about the fullness of time there?

Well, it speaks about the time being just right, that God sent forth his son when the time was right. And it means much the same here.

[29 : 51] when the fullness of time has come, God acted to bring about his plan. God acted to bring about his plan of salvation.

What was that plan? What is the end to which everything is working? Well, we see that in verse 10, as a plan for the fullness of time, as a plan for when the time is just right, what is the plan to unite all things in Christ in him, things in heaven, and things on earth?

That's where the world is ultimately going. That's where we're ultimately journeying to this evening. That's the ultimate future that everything will be united in Christ.

That great and final day of judgment, that great and final day when there's a new heavens and new earth, that great and final day when faith becomes sight, that's ultimately where all things are going. however far away it looks tonight, that's where it's going. However wicked the world seems to be and however much people seem to reject Christ, ultimately, that's where we're heading, that plan that God has.

[31 : 12] But we're told here that all things in that day will be united in Christ. Christ. Now what does that mean? Does that mean that all people will be saved?

Does that mean that ultimately all of humanity will be united in Christ? Well let's look at what Paul says elsewhere. Part of our principles of biblical understanding is that we let clearer passages speak on unclear passages.

Paul tells us Philippians 2, that great passage that speaks about the humility of Christ. We're told that ultimately God has given him, Jesus Christ, the name that is above every name.

That at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. There's some of us tonight who will do it willingly, lovingly.

And there's some of us tonight who will do it out of compulsion. Who will cry, come Lord Jesus and others who will be terrified at the sight.

[32 : 29] And the difference is are we those who have been set free or not? Are we those who have been redeemed, who have been bought back or not?

are we those whose sin is covered in Christ or not? And when that day comes, when the great fullness of time comes, will your knee bow willingly, lovingly to your Savior?

your, or will it be under compulsion to the King that you've always rejected? One day every knee will bow.

One day every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. But will you do it willingly, lovingly to your King?

or will you do it under compulsion, forced to confess by the majesty of Christ?

[33 : 41] Amen.