



## GOD'S GREAT PLAN

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Ephesians 1:3-14 ESV

*(3) 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, (4) even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him.*

*In love (5) he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, (6) to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.*

*(7) In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, (8) which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight (9) making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ (10) as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.*

*(11) In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, (12) so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory.*

*(13) In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, (14) who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.*

Ephesians is a letter about **God's glorious Church** – the Gospel of the Church. God is gathering a people from every tribe and nation for a bride for his son. Jesus will return for a glorious, radiant, triumphant church. He is building His church (Matthew 16:18).

### How did we get included in God's plan?

1. He chose us in him before the foundation of the world (Ephesians 1:3-6, 11)

Romans 8:29 ESV *For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified and those whom he justified he also glorified (past tense).*

John 15: 16 ESV *You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide,*

Paul and Barnabas were preaching ... Acts 13:48 ESV *And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and as many as were appointed to eternal life believed.*

- 1.1. Paul is making the point that God's plan of salvation began before God's creation of the world.
- 1.2. '*for God so loved **the whole world***' John 3:16 – means that Jesus died for everybody, not just the elect.

2 Corinthians 5:19 ... *in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.*

He loved the whole world, but he set his love on you. He chose us for himself. Before anyone else loved you, God loved you.

Deuteronomy 7:6-8 ESV (6) *"For you are a people holy to the LORD your God. The LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. (7) It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the LORD set his love on you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples, (8) but it is because the LORD loves you and is keeping the oath that he swore to your fathers, that the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.*

- 1.3. That means the deepest reason why anyone is saved is the electing love of God - although it doesn't feel like that at the time of believing.

And yet our choices do matter – we must repent and believe in Jesus.

This is a mystery; it should cause us to magnify God and be in awe of Him.

It means that the gospel is entirely of grace – according to the riches of his grace which he lavished upon us and so that no one can boast. Romans 5:8 *God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us.*

Philippians 2:12-13 ESV (12) *Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, (13) for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.*

2. Why did God do this?

To have a perfect bride, holy and blameless before him. Ephesians 1:4 *that we should be holy and blameless before him.*

3. Finally, how do we apply this today?

- 3.1. Seeing this mystery of election will give you great assurance of salvation.
- 3.2. It will give you great purpose for your life.
- 3.3. Go and tell others!

## Discussion Questions:

1. What impacted you about God and the gospel as you heard the message and got to grips with this passage from Ephesians – especially about **'being chosen in Christ'** before the foundation of the world?
2. Read Philippians 1:6 *I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.* If God is the author of your salvation – do you think he will be able to keep you until the end?
3. Read Ephesians 2:10 *for we are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.* If God chose me before the creation of the world – how do you think that affects **my life's purpose**? How does it enable me to live for God at this difficult time in history?
4. Read 2 Corinthians 5:18–21 *All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.*

How does this motivate you for gospel mission in East London and beyond?