

Ephesians

God's Grand, Christ-Centered Plan

Lesson #2 for July 8, 2023

Scriptures: Ephesians 1:3-14; 2:6; 3:10; Colossians 1:13-14; Deuteronomy 9:29.

1. What is God's "grand" plan?

[From the Bible study guide=BSG:] [This lesson] focuses on how Paul teaches the Ephesians—and us—to count our blessings. Not the blessings we think are important but the real blessings humanity needs so desperately. God, Paul emphasizes, gives these blessings to us in Christ. In Christ, we have been chosen and accepted by God. We are His, and He is ours. God treasures and regards us as His inheritance, and we treasure and regard Him as our inheritance. In Christ, we have been forgiven and redeemed. In Christ, we receive God's supreme plan of salvation. In Christ, humanity has its only chance at unity and harmony. In Christ, we live full of joy and praise. Because of Christ, we receive God's seal and a foretaste of eternal salvation. Because of Christ, we may receive the presence and the gifts of the Holy Spirit. God's gifts are spiritual primarily in the sense that the Holy Spirit gives them to us. The Holy Spirit brings these gifts to us from the very realms of heaven. All these riches are God's gifts to us all because we do not—and cannot—work to merit them. It is God who gives these gifts to us freely, out of His heart full of love for us. All who accept these gifts God predestines to be sealed and to taste beforehand the eternal blessings of His kingdom.

Lesson Themes: This ... lesson highlights three major themes:

- 1. In Christ, God lavished on us many gifts: election, adoption, redemption, forgiveness, joy of salvation, unity and harmony of humanity, and the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit as God's down payment for what is yet to come when Christ will return.**
- 2. Our response to God's gracious gifts is a life of praise and adoration in, and for, Christ.**
- 3. In the Holy Spirit, we experience a foretaste of our future eternal life.—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 26.††**

[BSG:] Twenty-five years after becoming the first person to walk on the moon, Neil Armstrong wrote a thank-you note to the creative team who designed the spacesuit, the Extravehicular Mobility Unit (EMU), in which he took those historic steps. Calling it "the most photographed spacecraft in history" and teasing that it was successful at hiding "its ugly occupant" from view, Armstrong thanked "the EMU Gang" at the Johnson Space Center for the "tough, reliable, and almost cuddly" suit that preserved his life, sending them "a quarter century's worth of thanks and congratulations."

Paul begins his letter to the Ephesians with a majestic thank-you note, praising God for the blessings He has poured out, blessings as essential to the lives of believers as a spacesuit is for someone who walks on the moon.

Paul argues that God has been at work on these essential blessings since “before the foundation of the world” (*Eph. 1:4*) and praises God for working through the ages on behalf of believers.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Sabbath Afternoon, July 1.^{†§} [Compare 2 Corinthians 11:16-33.][‡]

2. What kind of a list would you make of the blessings you have received from God?
3. Considering that he was writing from house arrest in Rome while waiting to be executed, Paul began his letter to the Ephesians not as you might expect. Instead, he began with a list of blessings that he considered to be far more important than his immanent fate.

Ephesians 1:3-14: ³ Let us give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! For in our union with Christ **he has blessed us by giving us every spiritual blessing in the heavenly world.** ⁴Even before the world was made, **God had already chosen us to be his through our union with Christ, so that we would be holy and without fault before him.**

Because of his love ⁵**God had already decided that through Jesus Christ he would make us his sons and daughters**—this was his pleasure and purpose. ⁶Let us praise God **for his glorious grace, for the free gift he gave us in his dear Son!** ⁷**For by the blood** [footnote: *by the blood; or by the sacrificial death.*] **of Christ we are set free, that is, our sins are forgiven.** How great is the grace of God, ⁸which he gave to us in such large measure!

In all his wisdom and insight ⁹God did what he had purposed, and **made known to us the secret plan he had already decided to complete by means of Christ.** ¹⁰This plan, which God will complete when the time is right, is to **bring all creation together, everything in heaven and on earth, with Christ as head.**

¹¹ All things are done according to God’s plan and decision; and **God chose us to be his own people in union with Christ because of his own purpose, based on what he had decided from the very beginning.** ¹²Let us, then, who were the first to hope in Christ, praise God’s glory!

¹³ And **you also became God’s people when you heard the true message, the Good News that brought you salvation.** You believed in Christ, and **God put his stamp of ownership on you by giving you the Holy Spirit he had promised.** ¹⁴**The Spirit is the guarantee that we shall receive what God has promised his people, and this assures us that God will give complete freedom to those who are his. Let us praise his glory!**—American Bible Society. (1992). *The Holy Bible: The Good News Translation** (2nd ed., Ephesians 1:3-14). New York: American Bible Society [abbreviated as *Good News Bible*].^{††§}

4. Try to imagine Paul, probably with chains on at least one arm and attached to a Roman soldier, writing those words!
5. Of course, the good news is really about how God relates to us and not about how we relate to Him!

6. Paul used the expression *in heavenly places* in several verses in Ephesians. It is only in Ephesians that this expression is used. What does it mean?

[BSG:] In Ephesians the phrases “**in the heavenly places**” and “in the heavens” or “in heaven” point to heaven as the dwelling place of God (*Eph. 1:3, Eph. 6:9*), to the location of spiritual powers (*Eph. 1:10, 20, 21; Eph. 3:10, 15; Eph. 6:12*), and to the location of Christ’s exaltation at the right hand of the Father (*Eph. 1:20*). Believers have access to these “heavenly places” in the present as the sphere where spiritual blessings are offered through Christ (*Eph. 1:3, Eph. 2:6*). Though “the heavenly places” have become a place of blessing for believers, they are still the location of conflict from evil powers that contest the lordship of Christ (*Eph. 3:10, Eph. 6:12*).—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Sunday, July 2.^{†§}

7. **The plan of salvation which we, perhaps selfishly, think is just about us is really about saving or even salvaging God’s reputation against the accusations of Satan which were stated in the hearing of the entire universe before this world was created!**
8. God’s plan, of course, was for all of us to be living in the Garden of Eden; but, He knew in advance what was going to happen. He realized that He would need to let it happen once, and only once! **Sin with its awful consequences does not need to be demonstrated more than once. God will keep a record that will be studied forever.**

[From the writings of Ellen G. White=EGW:] That which alone can effectually restrain from sin in this world of darkness, will prevent sin in heaven. The significance of the death of Christ will be seen by saints and angels.... The angels ascribe honor and glory to Christ, for even they are not secure except by looking to the sufferings of the Son of God. It is through the efficacy of the cross that the angels of heaven are guarded from apostasy. **Without the cross they would be no more secure against evil than were the angels before the fall of Satan. Angelic perfection failed in heaven.... The plan of salvation, making manifest the justice and love of God, provides an eternal safeguard against defection in unfallen worlds, as well as among those who shall be redeemed by the blood of the Lamb.**—Ellen G. White, *The Signs of the Times*,* December 30, 1889, par. 4; *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*,*[¶] vol. 5, 1132.8-9.^{††} Compare *The Truth About Angels* 205.2-3. [What guarantee does God offer that sin will not recur?][‡]

9. At the wedding in Cana of Galilee, Jesus performed His first known miracle, turning water into pure grape juice. He did that after His mother had asked Him to do something about the family’s crisis. In the Old Testament, Christ condemned the use of alcohol.

[EGW:] The words, “Mine hour is not yet come,” point to the fact that every act of Christ’s life on earth was in fulfillment of the plan that had existed from the days of eternity. **Before He came to earth, the plan lay out before Him, perfect in all its details. But as He walked among men, He was guided, step by step, by the Father’s will.** He did not hesitate to act at

the appointed time. With the same submission He waited until the time had come.—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages** 147.2.†‡

10. God had all this in view before He began the creation of this world! What kind of love does that tell us about? Imagine Jesus, the King of the universe and the Lord of lords based on His foreknowledge, agreeing in advance to all the things that happened to Him on this earth! Why would He have agreed to all of that?

11. Paul was writing to his friends in Ephesus and in all the churches around that area. He recognized that in that magnificent Temple of Artemis in Ephesus, every kind of evil and immoral thing was taking place. Sexual perversion was considered to be a kind of spiritual worship! He described things going on there as being carried out by the “spiritually dead.”

Ephesians 2:1-3: ¹In the past you were spiritually dead because of your disobedience and sins. ²At that time you followed the world’s evil way; you obeyed the ruler of the spiritual powers in space, the spirit who now controls the people who disobey God. ³Actually all of us were like them and lived according to our natural desires, doing whatever suited the wishes of our own bodies and minds. In our natural condition we, like everyone else, were destined to suffer God’s anger.—*Good News Bible*.*

12. God came down in the form of Jesus and offered us redemption. What does *redemption* mean?

Ephesians 1:7-8: ⁷For by the blood of Christ we are set free, that is, our sins are forgiven. How great is the grace of God, ⁸which he gave to us in such large measure!—*Good News Bible*.* [Compare Hebrews 10:17-18.]†

13. ***If the death of Jesus cause our sins to be forgiven, how does it do that?***

[BSG:] **The Greek word translated “redemption” in Ephesians 1:7 is *apolutrōsis*, originally used for buying a slave’s freedom or paying to free a captive.** One can hear echoed the voice of the slave trader auctioning his merchandise and the cold grinding of a slave’s manacles. **When the New Testament discusses redemption, it highlights the costliness of setting the slaves free.**

Our freedom comes at an extreme cost: “In him [Jesus] we have redemption through his blood” (*Eph. 1:7, ESV*). The idea of redemption also celebrates God’s gracious generosity in paying the high price of our liberty. God gives us our freedom and dignity. We are no longer enslaved!

“To be redeemed is to be treated as a person, not an object. It is to become a citizen of heaven, rather than a slave of the earth.”—Alister E. McGrath, *What Was God Doing on the Cross?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1992), p. 78.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Monday, July 3.†‡Ω§

14. Remember that, as we have discussed before, the idea that God has to pay something to the Devil to redeem us is a medieval idea; **it is not a biblical idea.** God does not owe Satan anything! Our Bible study guide says:

[BSG:] The benefits of Calvary also include “the forgiveness of our trespasses” (*Eph. 1:7, ESV*). On the cross, **Christ takes upon Himself the price of our sin, both past and future, “canceling the record of debt**

that stood against us with its legal demands” (*Col. 2:14, ESV*). In doing this work of redemption and forgiveness through Christ, God is acting as our generous Father, with the “riches of his grace” being “lavished upon us” (*Eph. 1:7, 8, ESV*).—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Monday, July 3.^{†§}

15. How does Christ “**take upon Himself the price of our sin, both past and future, ‘canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands’**”?
16. Here we find a conundrum or paradox. Of ourselves in our natural, sinful condition, we are really lost and worthless. However, then we remember that God claims us as His children; that makes us immensely valuable if we are willing to cooperate with Him! And obviously, God thinks we are valuable; look at the price He paid to get us back!
17. But this plan of salvation includes not just us on this world who respond to His love, but **it also involves the entire universe.**

Ephesians 1:8b-10: ^{8b}In all his wisdom and insight ⁹God did what he had purposed, and made known to us the secret plan he had already decided to complete by means of Christ. ¹⁰This plan, which God will complete when the time is right, is **to bring all creation together, everything in heaven and on earth, with Christ as head.**—*Good News Bible.**

18. Paul suggested in Ephesians 2:14 that:

Ephesians 2:14,16: ¹⁴For Christ himself has brought us peace by making Jews and Gentiles one people. **With his own body he broke down the wall that separated them and kept them enemies....** ¹⁶**By his death on the cross Christ destroyed their enmity; by means of the cross he united both races into one body and brought them back to God.**—*Good News Bible.*†* [Could we sit down in peace with anyone who is a Christian?][‡]

19. Paul went on to suggest that God has a plan to make us all a part of His temple with Jesus Christ Himself being the chief Cornerstone. (See Ephesians 2:20.)
20. Then, Paul goes on to describe his own work to the Gentiles and all people.

Ephesians 3:7-10: ⁷ I was made a servant of the gospel by God’s special gift, which he gave me through the working of his power. ⁸I am less than the least of all God’s people; yet **God gave me this privilege of taking to the Gentiles the Good News about the infinite riches of Christ,** ⁹**and of making all people see how God’s secret plan is to be put into effect. God, who is the Creator of all things, kept his secret hidden through all the past ages,** ¹⁰**in order that at the present time, by means of the church, the angelic rulers and powers in the heavenly world might learn of his wisdom in all its different forms.**—*Good News Bible.*†*

21. In the second half of Ephesians, Paul opened with a passionate plea—a call to unity.

Ephesians 4:1-16: ¹ I urge you, then—I who am a prisoner because I serve the Lord: live a life that measures up to the standard God set when he called you. ²Be always humble, gentle, and patient. Show your love by being tolerant with one another. ³Do your best to preserve the unity which the Spirit gives by means of the peace that binds you together. ⁴There is one

body and one Spirit, just as there is one hope to which God has called you. **⁵There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism; ⁶there is one God and Father of all,** who is Lord of all, works through all, and is in all.

⁷ Each one of us has received a special gift in proportion to what Christ has given. ⁸As the scripture says:

“When he went up to the very heights,
he took many captives with him;
he gave gifts to people.”

⁹Now, what does “he went up” mean? It means that first he came down to the lowest depths of the earth. ¹⁰So the one who came down is the same one who went up, above and beyond the heavens, to fill the whole universe with his presence. ¹¹It was he who “gave gifts”; he appointed some to be apostles, others to be prophets, others to be evangelists, others to be pastors and teachers. ¹²He did this to prepare all God’s people for the work of Christian service, in order to build up the body of Christ. ¹³And so we shall all come together to that oneness in our faith and in our knowledge of the Son of God; **we shall become mature people**, reaching to the very height of Christ’s full stature. ¹⁴Then we shall no longer be children, carried by the waves and blown about by every shifting wind of the teaching of deceitful people, who lead others into error by the tricks they invent. ¹⁵Instead, by speaking the truth in a spirit of love, we must grow up in every way to Christ, who is the head. ¹⁶Under his control all the different parts of the body fit together, and the whole body is held together by every joint with which it is provided. So when each separate part works as it should, the whole body grows and builds itself up through love.—*Good News Bible*.^{*†}

22. Paul went on all the way to nearly the end of his book describing **how we as humans should relate to each other—husbands to wives, wives to husbands, children to parents, parents to children, even masters to slaves, and slaves to masters.**
23. Do we recognize the enormity of God’s plan of salvation? Do we understand clearly how it impacted the rest of the beings in the universe? God’s plan is for us to be His future ambassadors, explaining what it means to be saved or redeemed from a lost condition in sin. It should be clear to us why we all need to be rejoicing!
24. What is God’s plan for us when we get to heaven? How will He treat us? Paul talked about us being given an inheritance by God.

Ephesians 1:11,14,18: ¹¹ All things are done according to God’s plan and decision; and **God chose us to be his own people in union with Christ because of his own purpose, based on what he had decided from the very beginning....**

¹⁴The Spirit is the guarantee that **we shall receive what God has promised his people**, and this assures us that God will give complete freedom to those who are his. Let us praise his glory!...

¹⁸I ask that your minds may be opened to see his light, so that you will know what is the hope to which he has called you, how rich are the wonderful blessings he promises his people.—*Good News Bible*.*†

25. Why do people receive an inheritance? Is it because they did something good? No. God has offered us the inheritance of eternal life, living with Him in heaven and then later back on the earth made new. That will be not because of anything we did, but because He has won the great controversy, defeating the misrepresentations and accusations of Satan.
26. In the Old Testament, God's people are sometimes referred to as being His *heritage*, or *inheritance*. (See Deuteronomy 9:29; 32:9; Zechariah 2:12.)
27. So, what is the difference between working to get something and inheriting it?
28. In biblical times, things were identified as to their ownership by stamps. These stamps were often produced by imprinting a metal stamp into wet clay and allowing it to dry and harden. Paul used that example.

Ephesians 1:13-14: ¹³ And you also became God's people when you heard the true message, the Good News that brought you salvation. **You believed in Christ, and God put his stamp of ownership on you by giving you the Holy Spirit he had promised.** ¹⁴The Spirit is the guarantee that we shall receive what God has promised his people, and this assures us that God will give complete freedom to those who are his. Let us praise his glory!—*Good News Bible*.*†

[BSG:] In ancient times, seals were used for a wide variety of functions: to authenticate copies of laws and agreements, to validate the excellence or quantity of a container's contents (e.g., *Ezek. 28:12*), or to witness transactions (e.g., *Jer. 32:10–14, 44*), contracts, letters (e.g., *1 Kings 21:8*), wills, and adoptions. **Imprinted on an object, a seal announced both ownership and protection.** The presence of the Holy Spirit in their lives marks believers as belonging to God and conveys God's promise to protect them (*compare Eph. 4:30*). They have been "sealed with the promised Holy Spirit" (*Eph. 1:13, ESV*).

"Paul plainly states that at the moment one gives his/her life to Jesus and believes in Him the Holy Spirit seals (Greek verb: *sphragizō*) that believer in Christ for the day of redemption. Wonderful liberating and reassuring truth! The Spirit of God marks Christ's followers with the seal of salvation right when they first believe."—Jiří Moskala, "Misinterpreted End-Time Issues: Five Myths in Adventism," *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society*, vol. 28, no. 1 (2017), p. 95.

The second image Paul uses for the Holy Spirit is that of "guarantee." The Holy Spirit is the guarantee of our inheritance, which looks toward the moment when the inheritance is to be given in full (*compare 2 Cor. 1:22, 2 Cor. 5:5*).—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Thursday, July 6.^{†§}

2 Corinthians 1:22: [It is God] who has placed his mark of ownership upon us, and who has given us the Holy Spirit in our hearts as the guarantee of all that he has in store for us.—*Good News Bible*.*†

[BSG:] The word translated “guarantee” (*arrabōn*) was a Hebrew loan word that was used widely in the common or Koine Greek of New Testament times to indicate a “first installment,” “deposit,” or “down payment” that requires the payer to make additional payments.

Note that believers do not pay this down payment but receive it from God. The treasured presence of the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers, says Paul, is a first installment of the full inheritance of salvation and redemption that will come with the return of Christ. Our job is to receive with a grateful and submissive heart what we have been offered in Jesus.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Thursday, July 6.†§

29. Paul’s rejoicing as recorded in Ephesians 1:3-4 is based on the idea that **God has provided a plan which every single person could take advantage of and be eternally a child of God.** This is not a case of God arbitrarily deciding each person’s fate. God loves each one of us more than our human parents love us. He wishes that He could save every single person, even the Devil. However, He “cannot” admit to heaven those who will want to start the great controversy all over again by their selfish behavior or attitudes.
30. God’s forgiveness and redemption are freely offered to anyone who is willing to cooperate in the salvation plan.
31. Paul was imprisoned in Rome, probably in a house for which he was paying the rent while being chained to a Roman guard. Philippians tells us that some of those guards became Christians! It is interesting to notice that while Nero sat on the throne, considering himself to be the ruler of the world, in Ephesians Paul referred to Jesus as *Lord Jesus, the Lord Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ our Lord, Jesus Christ, Christ Jesus*, or simply *Christ*, or *the Lord* many times. **He did not recognize Nero as having any authority!**
32. Paul recognized that Jesus is the risen Lord, Jesus Christ, the Savior in whom we have our own deliverance from our sins, and by whom we are going to have our final resurrection from the grave.
33. Much of the book of Ephesians is what could be described as “praise theology.” That would be especially true of Ephesians 1:3-14 as we noted earlier.

[BSG:] For Paul, God is not a mere concept; rather, God is our Father, our Creator, our Savior. This same God is full of love, might, justice, and grace. He always is ready to protect us and to save us. He always is ready to give us gifts and blessings so that we may enjoy our lives to the fullest in His kingdom, now and in the future. How could Paul write about such a God and about His great salvation without bursting into joyful praises?—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 27.‡
34. Once again, remember that Paul wrote this letter from “house arrest,” potentially waiting for his execution! He woke up every morning wondering if he would have his head chopped off that day! And yet, he wrote all those words of praise!
35. Paul recognized that the blessings God is offering us are not just material blessings here on this earth; they are blessings for eternity.

[BSG:] For Paul, salvation is a process that takes place on a universal scale. Paul takes us to the dizzying heights of the *epouranios*, or heavenly realms. The Greek word *epouranios* has several meanings. On the one hand, it means spiritual or godly, as opposed to earthly or sinful (see *John 3:12, Heb. 3:1*). On the other hand, the word refers to spatial dimensions (*1 Cor. 15:40, 41*). Paul also combines both the spatial and the spiritual dimensions of the word *epouranios* together (*1 Cor. 15:48, 49*). For instance, the *epouranios* in Ephesians 1:3 seems to refer to a spiritual reality: that is, God blesses us with the blessings that are found in Christ. However, in the same chapter, Paul describes heaven as a spatial realm other than the earth (*Eph. 1:10*). In Ephesians 1:20, Paul relates the *epouranios* to Christ's ascension to the throne of God. Paul's heavenly places, thus, are not some ethereal neoplatonic spheres, describing the immaterial divine world to which our incorporeal, disembodied spirit allegedly travels after death.—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 28.†§

36. So, what did Paul mean when he talked about *the heavens* or *heavenly places*?

[BSG:] Considering the larger biblical context, the notion of “heavenly places” is a very rich biblical concept. **On the one hand, “the heavens” refers to the entire universe that God created (*Gen. 1:1, Ps. 8:3, Ps. 19:1, 2 Chron. 6:18*), with all of its magnificent beauty. On the other hand, the Bible depicts another meaning of the “heavens,” closer to Paul’s meaning in Ephesians, in which the apostle relates the heavenly places with Creation and salvation. When God created the universe, He did not remain outside the universe (the Bible does not espouse deism). Rather, God chose to enter the universe as its Creator, Provider, and King (*Ps. 11:4*) and to establish a special, personal relationship with the beings He created in His image (*Gen. 1:26–28*). This relationship is accomplished in various ways. One, in His omnipresence, God was, and is, present throughout the universe (*Ps. 139:7, 8*). This idea means that we can pray to God everywhere, in any situation, and He hears us in real time.—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 28.†§**

37. Paul recognized that the rebellion that started the great controversy happened not here on this earth but rather, it began right in the throne room of heaven, next to God! (See Revelation 12:7-12.)

38. Considering all the praise about God the Father, and His Son, Jesus Christ, that Paul raises in the book of Ephesians, how could we ever be foolish enough to choose Satan’s side? After reading James 2:19, we see that not even the Devil is stupid enough to be an evolutionist!

39. There is an interesting electrical illustration that helps us to understand the position that Jesus took toward us.

[BSG:] In the past, numerous people died from accidental domestic electrocution. Modern houses are equipped with an ingenious protective device called a **ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI)**. The GFCIs sense

any difference in the current in the system and interrupt the electrical current in a matter of milliseconds. In this way, if a child plugs a metallic object into an outlet, the circuit interrupter will activate and stop the current and save the child from death. God planned to create our world and crown it with intelligent and free humans who could choose to reject God and [could choose to] sin. The consequences of sinning (like the consequence of touching a live electrical wire) result in the death of the sinner. God told Adam and Eve they would die in the moment or day that they sinned (*Gen. 2:17*). Yet, they did not die. On the contrary, they realized what had happened and ran away from God (*Gen. 3:6, 7*). It could be argued that the first pair died in a spiritual way or that they were condemned to death in the long run.—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 29.^{†‡§}

40. So, what we see is that Jesus in His life on this earth died that second death that the wicked will die at the end. He did so not because He needed to for personal reasons but because He wanted to demonstrate to us the seriousness of sin.

[BSG:] According to Paul, before the foundation of the world (*Eph. 1:4*), **God built into the Creation plan a safety feature, a spiritual GFCI**. When Adam and Eve fell into sin, they were supposed to die, because they touched the “bare wire” of sin. However, Adam and Eve did not die immediately, because the plan of salvation, created by God before the foundation of the world, was immediately activated. That plan was Christ, and whoever believes in Christ, whoever chooses to be found “in Christ,” is saved from the power and consequences of sin, guilt, alienation, and death.—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 29.^{†‡§}

41. Do we spend enough time thinking about all that God has done for us? Do we spend enough time in thanksgiving and praise? Do our normal thoughts and actions represent any of these ideas?

[BSG:] In Ephesians 1:5, Paul writes that **God “predestined us to adoption as sons and daughters** through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will” (*NASB*). Many Christians take this text to mean that the apostle teaches the concept of predestination in the sense that God selects us to be saved and that we cannot do anything to resist His will or change His decision in this matter. [However, that is not true.]—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 30.^{†‡§}

42. How could we explain this text to the following groups of people: (1) Our Christian friends who believe in the concept of predestination? And (2) our non-Christian friends or neighbors?

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