

according to the kind intention of His will. (1:5b)

God gave us our glorious future destiny (that of becoming full-fledged sons of God conformed to His image—Ephesians 1:5a; Romans 8:29) “*according to the kind intention of His will*” (Ephesians 1:5b). These passages abolish the falsehood that God is an angry tyrant who gains much pleasure in punishing His people. God’s intentions are “*kind*” toward those who are His. Remember: God’s relationships are based on what others receive, as is the case within the Trinity. Once we understand this principle, we can better comprehend why “*faith*” works “*through love*” (Galatians 5:6), and why only “*the love of Christ*”—not law, duty, or wrath—will keep us motivated to the end (2Corinthians 5:14). If you have viewed God differently than He is portrayed here, won’t you ask Him to enlighten “*the eyes of your heart*” (Ephesians 1:18)?

Ephesians 1:6—to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.

Let’s first observe the phrase:

to the praise of the glory of His grace, (1:6a)

To discover what Paul is addressing here, we first need to examine the phrase, “*the glory of His grace.*” Because God possesses flawless character, He possesses glory. He is holy, perfect, all wise, sinless, without error, just, forgiving, a God of grace, and much, much more. In other words, God’s character is so perfect and all-encompassing that when He shows up, glory is manifested (read Exodus 3:1-5 and Exodus 19:16-18). One of God’s most prevalent character qualities is His grace. In fact, Peter refers to Him as “*the God of all grace*” in 1Peter 5:10. Thus, God’s glory is an avenue through which His grace manifests itself, for all aspects of God’s flawless character are displayed through His glory. God’s grace is the subject in Ephesians 1:6; therefore, Paul says, “*the glory of His grace.*” Jesus possesses “*glory*” (John 1:14); so, He was correct in saying to Philip that in seeing Him he had seen the Father (John 14:9). In fact, Jesus was, and is, “*the image of the invisible God*” (Colossians 1:15). As J.B. Phillips states in his translation, “*Now Christ is the visible expression of the invisible God*” (Colossians 1:15).ⁱ Remember this input for future reference.

God “*predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself*” (Ephesians 1:5a) “*to the praise of the glory of His grace*” (Ephesians 1:6a). “*To the praise of the glory of His grace*” is an exceptionally captivating phrase, for praise and adoration should be man’s most natural response to God’s glory. Hence, when Moses entered the tent of meeting, and God’s cloud of glory would stand at its entrance, “*the people would arise and worship*” (Exodus 33:7-11). We, one day, will return with Christ (Revelation 19:11-16) as His glorified body (Ephesians 5:30; Colossians 3:4)—as individuals conformed to His image (Romans 8:29). Christ’s Second Coming will result in the defeat of the Antichrist and his armies during the campaign of Armageddon, after which the Millennium will be established and the creation restored to a place of abundant blessing (Romans 8:19-22). Worship, praise, and adoration will naturally follow.

Jesus was a visible expression of the Father’s glory during His First Coming (John 1:14; 14:9; Colossians 1:15). Because the majority rejected His Messiahship, they missed the awesome privilege of having the Spirit reveal the Father through the Son. Had the world only known Christ’s origin and purpose, “*they would not have crucified the Lord of glory*” (1Corinthians 2:8). A day will come, however, when the Son will be revealed to an even greater degree. This revelation will occur when He returns with His body, the church, in all her glory (Colossians 3:4)—having been conformed to His image (Romans 8:29). Even the cursed earth waits eagerly for that day (Romans 8:19-22), the day when church saints, clothed in their new bodies (Romans 8:23), return with Christ (Revelation 19:11-16). What unmatched glory and light will be manifested on that day! If Jesus’ desire during His First Coming was to reveal the Father (Matthew 11:27; Luke 10:22), just think of the degree to which the Father will be revealed when the Son returns with His

body, the church, made up of many sons conformed to His image (Romans 8:29) and brought to glory (Hebrews 2:10). Thus, Paul realized that after the church receives that to which she was predestined (Ephesians 1:5a), she will bring great praise to the Father's glory (Ephesians 1:6a). How could such an event not do so!

All that we receive through the Father's flawless plan for the church also brings glory to His Son. Why should it be any other way? Only He, the Creator, Who possesses all wisdom, sovereignty, power, and grace, could generate such a perfect strategy. In fact, what could be more glorifying to the Son than to return as head over all church saints, each of whom possess and reflect His glory? Paul states:

For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, (2Corinthians 4:17)

He also writes:

and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him. (Romans 8:17)

And again:

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us. (Romans 8:18)

Paul also communicates in Colossians 1:27:

...Christ in you, the hope of glory. (Colossians 1:27)

The writer of Hebrews records:

For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to perfect the author of their salvation through sufferings. (Hebrews 2:10)

Yes, "many sons" will be brought "to glory" through God's sovereign plan for man, and God is glorified through the Son. Therefore, the glory addressed in Ephesians 1:6 is the type of glory that enhances both God and man but is accomplished through the Son. Hence, through Christ, and to the Father's glory, we are conformed to the image of the Father's Son (Romans 8:29) and receive the adoption as sons (Ephesians 1:5)—that to which we were predestined when we believed on Christ. How do these remarkable events glorify God? Once we receive that to which we were predestined, we will live in sinless perfection in a glorified body—pursuing a lifestyle of total submission to the Father, the lifestyle that Christ experienced and demonstrated during His First Coming. Wow!

which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. (1:6b)

Be sure to follow as closely as possible as we progress. In fact, this section may require more than one reading.

"Which" (Ephesians 1:6b) refers to "grace" (Ephesians 1:6a), the grace that allowed God to predestine us "to adoption as sons" (Ephesians 1:5a). "Beloved" (Ephesians 1:6b) refers to Jesus, in Whom believers receive this grace. Combining these factors and considering that through having been placed "in the Beloved" (after repenting and believing while depraved) we were saved/justified (2Corinthians 5:17; 1Corinthians 12:13), we can conclude that we were not predestined until we were placed "in the Beloved."

The New Testament believer needs more grace than that supplied for predestination. In fact, he needs continual grace (on a daily basis) to experience everything made available through Christ (2Corinthians 12:9; 1Corinthians 15:10; Ephesians 1:2). Paul seems in Ephesians 1:6b, however, to address that particular grace which allows God to predestine New Testament believers to adoption as sons in conjunction with making them new. Should this be the case, we have further confirmation that a New Testament believer is predestined when he is saved/justified once placed in Christ—not beforehand. If you have difficulty accepting this line of thinking, consider that no person receives grace outside of Jesus Christ. Note: “*Beloved*” is a perfect tense participle, meaning that the Father, Who is “*love*” (1John 4:8), has always loved Jesus (“*the Beloved*”) with a permanent and enduring love (also read Matthew 3:17 and Colossians 1:13). Because we are in Jesus, “*the Beloved*,” we too are “*beloved of God*” (Romans 1:7). What a magnificent thought!

ⁱ Phillips, J.B. (1996). *The New Testament In Modern Language*. Touchstone Books, a division of Simon & Schuster. Used by permission.