

The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Ephesians

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CHAPTER THREE -

THE TRINITY AND THE PART OF EACH MEMBER OF THE GODHEAD IN OUR CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE

Some dear Christian people (yes, even born again people) think of the Trinity only as connected with the study of theology. There are many pros and cons concerning the Trinity. Some declare that the doctrine originated in the Roman Catholic church - which, of course, is false.

The Trinity was in the beginning - GOD the Father, GOD the SON, GOD The HOLY GHOST: Genesis 1:1: **"In the beginning God."** There is GOD the Father.

John 1:1-3: **"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with GOD, and the Word was GOD. The same was in the beginning with GOD. ALL THINGS WERE MADE BY HIM; and without Him was not any thing made that was made."**

In John 1:14 The HOLY GHOST enlightens us as to who the Word is:

"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." The Word is JESUS.

In the beginning, GOD the Father created all things by GOD the SON.

Therefore, in Genesis 1:1-2 we have the doctrine of the Trinity. But we are not to think of the Trinity as a theological fact only. Each member of the Godhead has a definite part in our salvation. If you are redeemed, if you are in CHRIST JESUS, rejoicing with joy unspeakable and full of glory . . . it is because of what GOD the Father has done, plus what GOD the SON has done, plus what GOD the Spirit has done.

GOD the Father so loved us that He yielded up His only begotten SON, that we (hell-deserving sinners) might be saved (John 3:16-18).

GOD the SON left the bosom of the Father (John 1:18), took a body (Romans 8:1-3) and in that body JESUS tasted death for every man (Hebrews 2:9). He was crucified and buried - but death could not hold Him. He rose again for our justification (Romans 5:1-13, I Corinthians 15:1-5). Now JESUS, our High Priest, is in Heaven, in the heavenly tabernacle, pleading for us.

CHRIST our High Priest accomplished the atonement on Calvary, carried the Blood of His atonement into the holy of holies - not into the temple here on this earth, but into very Heaven

itself. JESUS presented the Blood to the Father, and the Father accepted it. Therefore we have redemption through His Blood:

"For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into Heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us" (Hebrews 9:24).

In the Old Testament era, the high priest appointed by Jehovah GOD entered into the holy of holies in the Tabernacle, an acting representative for the people of GOD . . . for all the people . . . bearing upon his shoulders the names of the twelve tribes engraven on the precious stones of his breastplate. Thus in the person of the high priest the people of GOD were carried into the very presence of GOD Himself. In the same way now, in the person of JESUS CHRIST, we who are born again and united to Him through the miracle of The HOLY GHOST, are represented by Him and accepted as holy and without blemish before Him . . . in the presence of Almighty GOD (Ephesians 1:4). In JESUS, our High Priest, we are not only presented before GOD, but we are made to sit together in Christ in the heavenlies (Ephesians 2:6).

In the tabernacle in the Old Testament, there was found only one piece of furniture - the ark - typifying our Lord JESUS CHRIST in His deity and also in His humanity.

In the ark was found the Law (the Law broken by man - but perfectly kept in JESUS). Also in the ark was the manna (an omer full - the daily portion for one man, enough for his day by day needs). In JESUS, our day by day need, our daily portion is met.

Also in the ark was Aaron's rod that budded, typically teaching that CHRIST, through His resurrection, has been forever established in His high priestly position. He is the first fruits of them that slept. On the very day of His resurrection He called His followers (us) "**brethren.**" JESUS is now gone into the heavenlies, thereby pledging that one day He will return to "**[bring] many sons unto glory**" (Hebrews 2:10).

Upon the ark was found the mercy seat. Over the mercy seat was the Blood of the atonement, and the overshadowing, living presence of the cherubim. The Blood covers the broken Law, changing the throne of this universe from a judgment seat to a mercy seat for this glorious age of the Grace of GOD.

There is one further feature of the ark that I would like to point out in connection with our study and the spiritual teaching of Ephesians:

The staves. The staves were not to be "**taken from it.**" By the staves the ark was carried in the midst of GOD's people as they journeyed. It was present in all of their journeyings. While the ark was in the glory room, the holy of holies, it set forth the standing of the people of GOD. (Compare Ephesians 1:1-3.)

But the ark was also designed to be moved so that it was continually with the people as they journeyed (read Ephesians 1:4-6). Therefore the ark is a type of the Lord JESUS as He walks with us, never to leave us nor forsake us, that we may boldly say, "**The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear.**" Since GOD be for us, who can be against us?

GOD who delivered up His only Son, will by and through that SON freely give us all things. The ark and all having to do with the ark sets forth a beautiful picture of the Lord JESUS, our High Priest, our Ark, the One who makes us sons of GOD, secure "**in Christ**."

In these verses we see our standing in the Lord JESUS CHRIST:

- (a) We are chosen in Christ.
- (b) We are sanctified in Christ.
- (c) We are foreordained in Christ.
- (d) We are adopted in Christ.
- (e) We are accepted in Christ.
- (f) We are redeemed in Christ.
- (g) We are forgiven in Christ.
- (h) We are enriched in Christ.
- (i) We are enlightened in Christ, the Light of the world.
- (j) Our inheritance is in Christ.
- (k) We are sealed until the day of redemption in Christ (Ephesians 1:13, Ephesians 4:30).

Verse 4: "**According as He (GOD) hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world . . .**" GOD the Father planned our redemption long before we were born on this earth. We who are born again were "**chosen... in Him**" in the eternity behind us. Greek scholars tell us that the literal meaning is "chose us for Himself" . . . that is, GOD chose us for His own joy and pleasure and glory.

Never entertain the idea that I am a hyper-Calvinist. I believe in the sovereignty of GOD - GOD knows the end from the beginning - but that has nothing to do with the free will of man. I believe in Bible election, Bible predestination; so do not hastily jump to any conclusions because of the statement I have just made. I am not a fatalist; I do not believe that some are elected to go to Heaven while others are elected to be damned. I do not believe some are chosen to be saved, while in the mind of GOD, in the eternity behind us, He chose some to be damned. That is not the GOD I know, nor is it the Gospel I find in Ephesians.

When did GOD choose us? "**Before the foundation of the world.**" GOD has a plan, He has a blueprint - and all hell cannot stop the program of Almighty GOD!

In Acts 15 we are told of an outstanding council at Jerusalem concerning the question of circumcision and the teaching of the legalizers from Judaea. Paul and Barnabas were there, and they had quite a discussion. When that discussion was finished, when Paul and Barnabas had testified concerning salvation of the Gentiles through the Gospel, James spoke:

"Men and brethren, hearken unto me: Simeon hath declared how GOD at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for His name. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, WHO DOETH ALL THESE THINGS. KNOWN UNTO

GOD ARE ALL HIS WORKS FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE WORLD" (Acts 15:13-18).

GOD knows the end in the beginning. Because GOD is sovereign, omniscient, and omnipresent, He knew in the beginning that I would be saved. GOD knew that I would be a part of the Body of CHRIST; but the foreknowledge of GOD had nothing to do with my own free will. GOD did not force me to believe on the Lord JESUS CHRIST. I willingly accepted CHRIST as my personal Saviour.

Dear friend, if you ever step inside the pearly gates it will be because you received JESUS CHRIST (John 1:12).

To His own people, Israel, JESUS said, **"Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me."** The Jews searched the Law, they read the prophets, they sang the Psalms, but they refused to see the LAMB of GOD, the **"plant... out of a dry ground,"** the humble JESUS. They searched the Scriptures - but they had their own minds made up and they refused to see JESUS in the Scriptures. **"AND YE WILL NOT COME TO ME, THAT YE MIGHT HAVE LIFE"** (John 5:39-40).

Again, JESUS sat on the hillsides of Judaea and wept. He said to His own people Israel, GOD's chosen nation in the Old Testament era, **"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; HOW OFTEN WOULD I HAVE GATHERED THY CHILDREN TOGETHER, AS A HEN DOTH GATHER HER BROOD UNDER HER WINGS, AND YE WOULD NOT! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate: and verily I say unto you, Ye shall not see me, until the time come when ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord"** (Luke 13:34-35).

JESUS said to the Jews, **"Ye will not come to me that ye might have life."** To His own dear people He said, "I would have gathered your children as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings - but you would not let me!"

I wonder how the hyper-Calvinist explains that away? Of course, they have their man-made explanation; but I say to you who read these lines, if you are not saved, if you go to hell when you die, it will not be GOD's will. It is not GOD's will that any perish, but that all come to repentance. And if you die in sin and go to hell it will not be because you were elected or chosen (or predestined) to be damned; it will be because you refused to come unto the Lord JESUS CHRIST for salvation. If you have been led astray by hyper-Calvinism, may GOD help you to believe on the Lord JESUS CHRIST this moment. Trust Him as your Saviour, receive Him by faith - and I guarantee on the authority of GOD's Word, GOD will save you for JESUS' sake, this very moment.

As I pointed out in Acts 15, GOD does not operate in a hit-or-miss manner. GOD completed His plan of the ages before He created this earth. The church as a body, a complete body without spot or wrinkle, was chosen by GOD in CHRIST before GOD created Adam. The church is predestined to be completed without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. Individuals receive or reject JESUS according to their own free will.

GOD did not create man as a puppet or as a mechanical thing . . . an electronic brain that operates when GOD pushes the switch. Man is created in the image of GOD. Man is created with a will to choose or to reject the way of righteousness. I am so glad GOD placed Adam and Eve in a garden, and gave to them the right to choose. I am glad the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was placed in the Garden. Adam was clearly instructed by GOD as to what he could do, and what he was not to do. I am glad GOD gave Adam the right and the opportunity to choose. GOD, in CHRIST, has done for man what man could never have done for himself. Be sure to weigh this next statement before you reject it: GOD in CHRIST has done for man what man would not have done for himself if he could have! Man is totally and entirely depraved, but in CHRIST we are just as just as JESUS our Justifier is just (Romans 5:1ff.). In the light of GOD we are just as pure and holy as the Blood of the Lord JESUS that covers our sins. We as individuals have to do with CHRIST our Saviour - our High Priest, our Mediator.

GOD has committed into the hands of JESUS all authority in Heaven and on earth, and we have to do with CHRIST. He is the One who saves us, leads us, keeps us - and He is the One who will present us to the Father. I repeat: The church as an organism, a body of which JESUS is the head and the foundation (Ephesians 5 and I Corinthians 3) was elected, chosen, and predestined by GOD before the foundation of this world.

We, as individuals, are in CHRIST because we have believed in His finished work. GOD's act of choosing us before the foundation of the world was "**in Christ**" the SON. Before the beginning of things as we know earthly things today, JESUS had already given Himself over to the Father in solemn covenant for the work of redemption. He (JESUS), "**. . . the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world**" (Revelation 13:8), willingly laid His life down that we might have life. The Blood of JESUS CHRIST was declared to be the only way of salvation before GOD ever made the earth or man.

"But as He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy. And if ye call on the Father, who WITHOUT RESPECT OF PERSONS judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear: Forasmuch as ye know that ye are not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; 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, BUT WAS MANIFEST IN THESE LAST TIMES FOR YOU, Who by Him do believe in God, that raised Him up from the dead, and gave Him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God. Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth forever" (I Peter 1:15-23).

In these verses we learn that the Blood of JESUS was foreordained before GOD ever made this universe. The redemption price of a soul is the Blood - nothing less. GOD demands Blood . . . the Blood of an innocent, sinless sacrifice - and that could have been no one except the Son. So - it was agreed between Father and SON that JESUS would die on the Cross for the remission of sin. This covenant was made between the members of the Godhead before GOD ever created this

universe or anything therein. Why did GOD choose us? What was the purpose of His choosing? Did GOD choose us just to save us - or for something far greater? The answer is, GOD chose us **"... THAT WE SHOULD BE HOLY AND WITHOUT BLAME"** in His presence.

JESUS expresses the same truth in these words: **"Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit . . ."** (John 15:16a).

To the believers at Thessalonica Paul said: **"But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: Whereunto He called you by our Gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord JESUS CHRIST"** (II Thessalonians 2:13-14).

To the believers in Rome Paul said: **"For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He did predestinate, them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified. What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?"** (Romans 8:29-32).

Every born again, Blood washed, redeemed child of GOD is predestined to be conformed to the image of the SON of GOD, **"not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing."**

Election, predestination, and the foreknowledge of GOD is to be taught to spiritually-minded believers - *never* to be preached to unbelievers in a mixed multitude. GOD pity the preacher who will stand before an audience made up of believers and unbelievers, and preach to that mixed audience that some are elected to be saved, and if they are elected they will be saved; but if they are not elected they cannot be saved. GOD pity such stupid spiritual ignorance!

Verse 5: **"Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will."**

Predestination is the bringing to pass of things determined by GOD in the eternity behind us. Every believer is predestined to be conformed to the image of the SON of GOD. Conformation occurs as we walk in the Spirit, feeding upon the milk and the meat of the Word. When we are born again we are babes in CHRIST. We are commanded to desire the sincere milk of the Word that we may grow, and it is GOD's good pleasure that we become strong in the Lord, good soldiers, fully grown spiritual men and women in CHRIST. We are to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling. We do not work FOR our salvation . . . salvation is GOD's gift; but after receiving salvation we are to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling. We are to grow and become stronger day by day, as we study and feed upon the bread, meat, and milk of the Word of the living GOD.

In verse 5 the word **"adoption"** has to do with our position, not with our relationship to GOD. Every believer is a son of GOD, a child of GOD through the new birth. We are born - not of Blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man - but **"born... of God"** (John 1:12-13).

We are adopted into the family of GOD through the act of GOD, placing us in the position of an adult son. Study carefully Galatians 4:1-5 and you will see what I mean.

This may be a poor illustration, but perhaps it will help someone to see what I am trying to get across. We become a son of GOD, a babe in CHRIST, through the miracle of the new birth. We are born of The HOLY SPIRIT (John 3:5). Under the Law, a babe was under tutors until it reached a certain age. When the child became of age, he became heir. Thank GOD, under grace we are not only born sons of GOD, but we are adopted into the family of GOD, giving to us the position of heirship. The minute we are born again we become an heir of GOD and a joint-heir with JESUS CHRIST (Romans 8:17). We are not under the Law, we are under Grace. We are not under instructors, but the Grace of GOD teaches us (Titus 2:11-15). We are predestinated and adopted children of GOD in CHRIST, who is the firstborn among many brethren. CHRIST satisfied the heart of GOD in every minute detail, fulfilled the Law and the prophets - every jot and every tittle (Matthew 5:17-18), completed the work the Father gave Him to do (John 17) and when He had Himself purged our sins He sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high (Hebrews 1:1-3).

Verse 6: **"To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the beloved."**

We are now accepted by GOD the Father - in the Beloved, the SON. When JESUS was baptized GOD said, **"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."** On the Mount of Transfiguration GOD said concerning JESUS, **"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him!"**

Just before JESUS began walking the last mile of the way to Calvary He cried out, **"What shall I say? Father, save me from this hour."** Then He answered Immediately, **"No! I came into the world for this hour! Father, glorify thy name!"** **"Then came there a voice from Heaven, saying, I HAVE BOTH GLORIFIED IT, AND WILL GLORIFY IT AGAIN! The people therefore, that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered: others said, An angel spake to Him. JESUS answered and said, This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes"** (John 12:23-30).

We are accepted by GOD the Father because we have received the Saviour, the SON. What assurance we have, beloved! We are sons of GOD, children of GOD, adopted into the family of GOD, thereby an heir of GOD . . . accepted by GOD in the beloved, the Lord JESUS CHRIST, who is our High Priest. Therefore we, as sons, come boldly to the Father in prayer, in the name of JESUS, making known our needs. Study carefully Hebrews 10:19-23.

JESUS, one glorious day, will . . . **"PRESENT [US] FAULTLESS BEFORE THE PRESENCE OF HIS GLORY WITH EXCEEDING JOY!"** (Jude 24).

Dear sinner saved by Grace, never forget that GOD has saved you for CHRIST's sake. GOD has forgiven you for CHRIST's sake. GOD has redeemed you for CHRIST's sake (Ephesians 4:32). GOD has saved you - **"to the praise of the glory of His grace"** (Ephesians 1:6). GOD through His great love and His great Grace provided JESUS in a body, that in the body of flesh JESUS might fulfill every jot and every tittle of GOD's holy Law, and through His shed Blood might

purchase redemption for sinners.

All of this was blueprinted, planned, purchased and provided by GOD the Father in order that His Grace in JESUS might be published in all Heaven's glory. That is exactly what will happen after the Rapture. In the consummation of all things GOD will display the church (the Body of CHRIST, the redeemed) in the heavenlies - and all of GOD's creation will witness, in the church, the exceeding riches of GOD's Grace (Ephesians 2:6-7). **"When He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe"** (II Thessalonians 1:10).

I believe in Bible election. We need not close our eyes and deny the doctrine of election in Scriptures. I do not profess to fully understand election as taught in the Scriptures, but after many years of studying the Word of GOD I do feel that I understand it a little better than I ever have before. As I have said before, election always concerns GOD's people only.

JESUS came into the world to seek and to save the lost (Luke 19:10). The lost do not seek JESUS. The natural man is blind, dead, totally and entirely depraved. Something must happen from without to stir the natural man within, before the natural man will accept JESUS as Saviour. According to John 15:16, we who are believers did not choose JESUS - He chose us. But remember, election never applies to anyone except believers. All others are excluded.

Men are not elected to be separated from GOD eternally. Men are not elected to be damned. The word "election" cannot be used in such a manner. If we ever understand the election of GOD, we must see clearly that CHRIST is the first CHOSEN ONE. CHRIST is the first of the elect of GOD.

"Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect (note: MINE ELECT), in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon Him: He shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause His voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall He not break, and the smoking flax shall He not quench: He shall bring forth judgment unto truth. He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till He have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for His law. Thus saith God the Lord, He that created the heavens, and stretched them out; He that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; He that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein: I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house" (Isaiah 42:1-7).

From this we clearly see that CHRIST is the first chosen one. He is the elect of GOD. Then GOD chose us in CHRIST. I trust I can get across to you what I feel in my own heart and see through the eye of the inner man. GOD chooses us in JESUS. Only those who are in JESUS are accepted of GOD, and GOD has chosen everyone who will accept the Lord JESUS CHRIST as their personal Saviour. Let the Scriptures speak:

"Wherefore He (JESUS) is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Hebrews 7:25). GOD has elected a Body of CHRIST, the New Testament church, IN CHRIST. GOD can accept the sinner only as

the sinner is in CHRIST JESUS. GOD has not chosen certain individuals only to become members of the Body of CHRIST.

GOD loved the whole wide world; GOD gave JESUS for the whole wide world. JESUS died for the sins of the whole wide world. But we know - and certainly GOD knows - that all will not receive JESUS. But as many as receive JESUS, to them God gives the power to become sons; and when the individual receives JESUS, GOD "borns" that individual into the chosen body - the elect Body of CHRIST.

Foreordination is GOD's enforcement act, whereby what GOD determined in the eternity behind us is carried out. Foreordination operates through the sovereign will of GOD (Ephesians 1:5). Foreordination insures us that what GOD has purposed for all believers shall never be nullified, but shall surely come to pass. Foreordination and the free will of man, like two parallel lines that meet at infinity, harmonize in GOD. When we view the foreordination of GOD and the free will of man from eternity to eternity, we will find no conflict. Difficulties disappear and our thinking becomes clear if we will but realize that foreordination, election, predestination pertain only to GOD's people.

Every man in the world has a free will to accept or reject JESUS CHRIST, every man is invited and urged to accept the Lord JESUS. He took a body of flesh and bones, that in a body like unto our body He (JESUS) ". . . **by the grace of God should taste death for every man**" (Hebrews 2:9).

Please do not accuse The HOLY SPIRIT of being insincere or hypocritical. If individuals are elected and predestined to be lost, if individuals are foreordained to be damned, The HOLY SPIRIT would not have said through Paul, that JESUS by the grace of GOD should taste death for every man. On the contrary, The HOLY SPIRIT would have said that JESUS by the grace of GOD came to taste death for the elect . . . or for the chosen. Please be reasonable, and face the fact that GOD knows the end in the beginning - yet GOD's knowledge of the end in the beginning has nothing to do with your free will. You as an individual have the opportunity to receive JESUS, and when you receive JESUS, GOD accepts you in the Beloved.

"WHOSOEVER WILL, LET HIM TAKE OF THE WATER OF LIFE FREELY"
(Revelation 22:17).

Here is the understanding that The HOLY SPIRIT has given to me concerning Bible election: GOD the Father elected the body - the New Testament church; and we know the body is made up of a certain number of believers. One day, some person somewhere will be born again, and that will complete the body. When the body is complete, the rapture will take place that instant . . . **"in the twinkling of an eye."** GOD the Father elected a body. GOD chose a body as a body. The body is made up of individuals. Individuals become members of the body by receiving JESUS of their own free will.

~ end of chapter 3 ~

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