

**Outline of
the Messages for the Full-time Training
in the Fall Term of 2007**

GENERAL SUBJECT: THE BELIEVERS

Message Twenty-One

Their Past, Present, and Future—Destined to Be Blessed

Scripture Reading: Eph. 1:3-6; 1 Pet. 1:2; Rom. 8:29; Acts 20:24; 2 Tim. 4:7

- I. As believers, we have an eternal history, for our history began in eternity past; the history of the eternal Triune God is our history, and we were destined to be blessed, even in eternity past:**
- A. God in eternity past made an eternal economy, and the content of God's economy is a romance between God and His chosen people; at the beginning of the Bible there is one single God, the "bachelor" God, and at the end there is the "married" God, the ultimately incorporated God, the New Jerusalem—Eph. 3:9; 1 Tim. 1:3-6; Jer. 31:3; Gen. 1:1, 26; 2:18; Isa. 54:5; Rev. 19:7-8; 21:2, 9-10.
 - B. From the days of eternity, the Triune God was preparing to come forth out of eternity into time by incarnation in order to "court" His chosen ones with His love in His judicial redemption so that they might become His bride by loving Him with His love through their organic salvation—Micah 5:2; John 3:16; 2 Cor. 5:14-15; 11:2:
 - 1. "I have loved you with an eternal love, / Therefore I have drawn you with lovingkindness"—Jer. 31:3.
 - 2. "I drew them with cords of a man, / With bands of love"—Hosea 11:4.
 - 3. "Draw me; we will run after you"—S. S. 1:4a.
 - 4. We say that our King's love to us is *better* than wine; He responds to our love by saying that our love to Him is *much better* than wine; this shows that although we treasure the Lord's love, we cannot comprehend how precious His love is toward us; even in loving us, He takes the preeminence—v. 2; 4:10; Col. 1:18b; cf. Rev. 2:4.
 - C. God in His Divine Trinity held a council in eternity to make the determination concerning the crucial death of Christ for the carrying out of God's eternal economy; this is the "bachelor" God becoming the incarnated God and the redeeming God so that He might become the indwelling God and the incorporated God for the full accomplishment of His eternal economy in uniting, mingling, and incorporating Himself with His chosen people unto His eternal glory—Acts 2:23; 1 Pet. 1:20; Rev. 13:8; Psa. 90:1-2; John 1:1, 14, 29, 32, 42, 51; 1 Cor. 15:45b; Rev. 4:5; 5:6; 21:3, 22; Eph. 2:10.
- II. God blessed the believers in Christ with the spiritual blessings in the heavenlies before the foundation of the world—1:3-6:**
- A. *Before the foundation of the world* implies that the world, which is the universe, was founded for man's existence to fulfill God's purpose—Rev. 4:11;

John 1:3; Zech. 12:1; Eccl. 3:11; Rom. 1:20; Psa. 19:1-2; Acts 14:15-17; 17:23-31; Job 38:1-4; 10:13; Eph. 3:9; Eccl. 1:3-9; cf. Isa. 40:31.

- B. In eternity past we were foreknown by God—Rom. 8:29; 1 Pet. 1:2:
1. To foreknow includes the meaning of approval, appreciation, and possession; in eternity past God approved us, appreciated us, and possessed us—Jer. 1:5; John 1:48; cf. 1 Cor. 8:1-3.
 2. In eternity past we were foreknown by God “according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Himself”; God’s good pleasure is what makes Him happy, His heart’s desire—Eph. 1:9.
 3. In eternity past before the creation of the heavens and the earth and before the beginning of time, God foreknew us, chose us, and predestinated us to be conformed to the image of His Son, that His Son would be the Firstborn among many brothers—Rom. 8:29.
 4. We were “chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father in the sanctification of the Spirit unto the obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ”—1 Pet. 1:2.
- C. In eternity past God chose us to be holy—to have His divine nature—so that we could become Him in nature, sanctified in our spirit, soul, and body to be His bride in love—Eph. 1:4; 2 Pet. 1:4; cf. Eph. 5:25-27:
1. God chose us in Christ; outside of the sphere of Christ, it is not possible for man to be chosen or blessed by God—1:4.
 2. God chose us because He loved us, and He loved us without reason—Jer. 31:3; 1 Thes. 1:4.
 3. “God has chosen the foolish things of the world that He might shame those who are wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world that He might shame the things that are strong, and the lowborn things of the world and the despised things God has chosen, things which are not, that He might bring to nought the things which are, so that no flesh may boast before God”—1 Cor. 1:27-29.
 4. God chose us because of His mercy in His selection of grace—Rom. 9:11, 15-16, 21, 23; 11:4-6.
 5. “You did not choose Me, but I chose you”—John 15:16.
 6. “I know whom I have chosen”—13:18; cf. 2 Tim. 2:19.
 7. “Who shall bring a charge against God’s chosen ones? It is God who justifies”—Rom. 8:33.
- D. In eternity past God predestinated us unto sonship—to have His divine life—so that we could become Him in life, vivified in our spirit, soul, and body to be His sons in glory—Eph. 1:5; Rom. 8:10, 6, 11; Heb. 2:10-11:
1. We were predestinated and designated to be God’s inheritance for His enjoyment (Eph. 1:11, 18) so that we might inherit God as our inheritance for our enjoyment (v. 14).
 2. Christ as God’s wisdom was predestined, predestinated, foreordained before the ages for our glory that we might express Him as His masterpiece for His exhibition to the universe—1 Cor. 2:7-10; Eph. 2:10.

III. Because God in eternity past foreknew us, chose us, and predestinated us, we have a destiny to fulfill—Jer. 1:5; Acts 20:24; 2 Tim. 4:7:

- A. Seemingly, we believed in Christ for no reason, but the reason we believed in Him is that we were predestinated, marked out beforehand, by God the Father—Acts 13:48; 18:9-11.
- B. We all have to realize that we have been marked out beforehand by God for the accomplishment of His economy; because God has put His mark on us, we cannot run away from Him—Jonah 1:3; Jer. 23:24; Psa. 139:1, 5-12, 16, 23.
- C. Since we have been pre-marked, marked out beforehand by God in eternity past, we have no choice except to give ourselves to the Lord for His recovery and to be beside ourselves in the constraint of Christ's impelling love for the church life—2 Cor. 5:13-15.
- D. For every believer there is a pathway, a course, predetermined by God for him to walk on; the responsibility of every believer is to seek out this course, walk on this course, and finish this course—Acts 20:24; 26:19; 2 Tim. 4:7; 1 Cor. 9:24; Heb. 12:1-2.
- E. God wants to make us overcomers in His recovery, those who finish their course by carrying out the intrinsic, divine history within the outward, human history—Acts 20:24; Isa. 45:15; Esth. 2:7; 4:14-16; 10:3; Neh. 2:10; 1 Sam. 4:3, 21-22; Dan. 1:6-8; Rev. 2:7, 17; 3:20.

IV. We are blessed by God according to the measure of the rule which the God of measure has apportioned to us and according to our function in the Body which the Head of the Body has ordained for us—2 Cor. 10:13, 15; 1 Cor. 12:18; Rom. 12:2-3:

- A. The consequence of participating capriciously in God's work by going beyond one's measure is a lifetime of leprosy—2 Chron. 26:16-21.
- B. The consequence of rebelling against God by not recognizing and treasuring one's measure is a spirit of rebellion that opens the gates of Hades—Num. 16:1-4, 8-11, 28-35; cf. Matt. 16:18.
- C. Every worker has a specific work which God measures to him; every believer has a pathway on which God wants him to walk; if you are standing in your rightful position, working in your rightful service, and walking on your rightful pathway according to God's ordination, that is the highest glory—Acts 20:24; Jer. 1:5-19; Ezek. 1:1-3; 1 Chron. 4:10; 1 Cor. 12:18-19, 24.