

## GOD

### We are Accepted by God (Ephesians 1:6)

#### Ephesians

1:6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

We are “accepted in the beloved”. Let’s take a look at what this means. We will consider what it means to be accepted by God and who made this available through his accomplishments, and then we’ll compare our being accepted by God to being acceptable to God (these are different). Through all this we’ll see more of the greatness of God’s grace, His unmerited divine favor, to us. We’ll gain a greater appreciation of what God made freely available to us, enabling us to live victoriously in life.

Before we examine this verse in detail, let’s consider a verse in Luke, chapter 1:

#### Luke

1:28 And the angel (*Gabriel*) came in unto her (*Mary*), and said, Hail, *thou that* art highly favoured, the Lord *is* with thee: blessed *art* thou among women.

Mary was “highly favored”, God was with her, and she was blessed.

The word “with” in this verse is the Greek word *meta*, which means “in common with” as opposed to simply being alongside of, among, or near. It’s the same word used in Acts 11:21, which says: “And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord.” So, in Luke 1:28 God’s being “with” Mary was much more than merely being just next to her.

In this verse we see that not only was God with Mary, but that she was “blessed” and “highly favored”. We know that because of her believing, Mary was the one whom God so highly favored that she was the one to give birth to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Wouldn’t it be great for us to be “blessed” and “highly favored” by God?

We already know that we are blessed, as we see in Ephesians Chapter 1, verse 3:

#### Ephesians

1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ.

Let’s read the next few verses in chapter 1 to review a bit about how we have been blessed by God:

1:4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation (*overthrow*) of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him (*in his presence*) in love:

1:5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption (*sonship*) of children by (*through the accomplishments of*) Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,  
1:6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

What about being “highly favored”? Can this apply to us, too?

First, we need to get a better understanding of what it means to be “highly favored”. Does it mean that God likes, or favors, someone more than someone else? We know this can’t be the case, because God is no respecter of persons, as it says in Acts 10:34.

The words “highly favoured” in Luke 1:28 are translated from the one Greek word *charitoō*, which means “to make an object of favor”. God made it available for Mary to become favored. In Mary’s case, it was because of her believing. God knew in His foreknowledge that she would believe, so He made it available for Mary to be favored.

Still, what does it mean to be favored, and how can it apply to us? Let’s consider this word *charitoō* more closely. This word, translated in Luke as “highly favored”, is actually the verb form of the Greek word *charis*, which means grace.

Grace is God’s unmerited divine favor. So, Mary’s being “highly favored” could be rendered “full of grace”, and it means that God freely gave this favor to Mary: she didn’t earn it. All she did was believe: she didn’t have to do any “good works” to get it, and because of her believing, she became the one who would bring forth the Promised Seed.

To find out if we are “highly favored” let’s look at all the other usages of this word *charitoō* and see if any of them applies to us.

It turns out that the word *charitoō*, translated “highly favored” in Luke 1, is used only one other time in the Bible, and that is in Ephesians Chapter 1, verse 6.

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1:6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

We see the word grace in this verse, but this is the word *charis*. The words in this verse that are translated from *charitoō*, rendered “highly favored” in Luke 1:28, are the words “made accepted”. Actually, a more literal translation would be “made objects of grace”.

We saw that to be “highly favored” was to be made an object (or receiver) of favor by grace, and here in Ephesians 1:6 we see that God has made us “objects (receivers) of grace”, translated in the King James Version as “accepted.”

We are “accepted” by God. What does that mean? When we got born again, confessing the Lord Jesus and believing that God raised him from the dead (Romans 10:9), we became children of God. We were accepted into the Family of God and could become members of His household.

God's grace made it available for us to be accepted. All we had to do was to believe (just like Mary believed, and was highly favored and blessed). This was purely by God's grace, His unmerited divine favor.

Consider Ephesians chapter 2, beginning in verse 7:

### Ephesians

2:7 That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

2:8 For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

2:9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.

Now look back at Chapter 1, verse 6:

1:6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

According to the Stephens Text, the Greek manuscript from which the King James New Testament was translated, this verse more literally reads: "To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he made us objects of grace in the beloved."

Four of the other major Greek manuscripts provide a somewhat different wording: "To the praise of the glory of his grace, which he freely bestowed on us in the beloved."

The main point here is God's grace, His unmerited divine favor. We didn't deserve it. God freely bestowed this great grace upon us.

Let's consider the last part of verse 6. It says that he has made us "accepted in the beloved".

Who is "the beloved"?

Let's consider the Gospel of Matthew, verse 5 of chapter 17. In the context, Jesus Christ was with Peter, James, and John on the Mount of Transfiguration:

### Matthew

17:5 While he (*Peter*) yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: hear ye him.

"The Beloved" in Ephesians 1:6 is Jesus Christ.

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1:6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

Notice the word “the” before “beloved”. The word “the” is in the Greek text, so we know that “beloved” is a noun, referring to Jesus Christ. We see this if we continue reading in chapter 1:

- 1:7 In whom (*in the beloved, Jesus Christ*) we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness (*remission*) of sins, according to the riches of his (*God's*) grace;  
1:8 Wherein (*in God's grace*) he (*God*) hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence;  
1:9 Having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:

We see then that it was the accomplishments of Jesus Christ, the beloved, that brought us redemption, remission of sins, and our acceptance into God's family as His children. And it's all made available to us by God's grace.

If we look at verse 6 of Ephesians chapter 1 in the Lamsa Bible, translated directly from an Aramaic text, we can more clearly see that our receiving of God's grace is available because of what Jesus Christ accomplished: “To the praise of the glory of his grace, that he has poured upon us by his beloved one.”

In the *Aramaic-English Interlinear New Testament*, which uses the Aramaic Peshitta Text, Ephesians Chapter 1 verse 6 reads: “That the glory of his grace might be glorified, which he poured forth upon us by means of his beloved” (in other words, by what Jesus Christ accomplished).

So, from Ephesians chapter 1 verse 6 we see that our being made accepted by God was made possible by the accomplishments of Jesus Christ.

When we were accepted, we became children of God. We have sonship. So, our being accepted by God refers to our standing as sons and daughters of God.

We should take a look at another verse, where the word accepted is used, to see why it is important to be diligent workmen of the Word who carefully consider the words we read. The verse is II Corinthians, chapter 5 verse 9:

### II Corinthians

5:9 Wherefore we labour (*also*), that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him (*of God*).

Here we see the word accepted, just like we saw in Ephesians chapter 1. But according to this verse, to be accepted by God, we need to labor, or work. This contradicts Ephesians 1:6, where it says that we are accepted by God's grace, which is not by works.

The word translated “accepted” in II Corinthians 5:9 is not the word *charitoō* we saw in Ephesians. It is the word *euairestos*, which more literally means “well-pleasing.” This refers to

our state, our being in fellowship with God. When we are in fellowship with God, doing what is right, we are well-pleasing to God.

This word *euarestos* is only translated “accepted” in this one verse, but it is translated “well-pleasing” twice, “that which is well-pleasing” twice, and “acceptable” twice. A more accurate rendering of this word in II Corinthians 5:9 would be “acceptable”, not “accepted”.

Obviously, if we are out there sinning, our behavior is not “well-pleasing” to God: it is not “acceptable” to God. In order to be acceptable to God, we need to be in fellowship.

To be accepted, as it says we are in Ephesians 1:6, refers to our sonship, our standing, which doesn’t change. To be acceptable, as it says we are to labor to be in II Corinthians 5:9, refers to our being in fellowship, our state, which can fluctuate.

Regarding these two words, E. W. Bullinger wrote in his book *How to Enjoy the Bible*: “We do not labor to be accepted, but having been “accepted in the beloved” we make it our aim for our walk to be acceptable.”

Let’s return to Ephesians 1:6 to put our being accepted in context.

### Ephesians

1:6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

We see the importance of God’s grace. With the exception of verse 2, where “grace” is part of Paul’s standard salutation seen in all of his writings, verse 6 contains the first use of the word “grace” in Ephesians, and here it’s used in both the noun form (*charis*) and in the verb form (*charitoō*), as we’ve already seen.

As we continue in Ephesians Chapter 1, we again see “grace” in verse 7 (“the riches of his grace”), and it is inferred again in verse 8 (“wherein (*in his grace*) he hath abounded...”)

Obviously, God’s grace is a major theme in the Book of Ephesians, driving home the point that it is by God’s unmerited divine favor, not by our works, that we have what we have as members of God’s family.

Of course, God’s grace is a major theme throughout the Church Epistles. The word *charis*, which is used 150 times in the New Testament and Gospels, is translated “grace” 129 times. Of these, 75 of these occurrences of grace are in the seven Church Epistles, the “all truth” addressed to us. The number 75 is 5 x 5 x 3, our complete grace times grace.

God’s grace is such an important point in the Book of Ephesians that God even does more to emphasize His grace in verse 6. Look at the first part of the verse:

1:6a To the praise of the glory of his grace...

The word “to” refers us back to verse 5, where it says that we were predestinated by God to become His children through the accomplishments of Jesus Christ by the good pleasure of His

will. God made us His children because He wanted to (the good pleasure of His will). He didn't have to do it, and we didn't deserve it, but God did it because of His grace.

The great magnitude of God's grace which He poured out upon us to make us accepted as His children is emphasized in the first part of verse 6. The words "the glory of his grace" in verse 6 are a Figure of Speech, called antimereia, in which one part of speech (such as a noun, adjective, or verb) is used instead of another. Here, the word "glory," a noun, is used instead of the adjective "glorious", to emphasize how glorious His grace is. You could say "to the praise of his GLORIOUS grace."

The word "praise" in verse 6 is from the Greek word *epainos*. It is not the same as the word "praise" in places like Acts Chapter 2, verse 47 where it says "Praising God, and having favor with all the people" or in Romans 15:11 where it says "Praise the Lord." In those cases, the word translated "praising" or "praise" is the Greek word *aineō*, which is used for giving praise to God, including praising God by speaking in tongues.

In Ephesians Chapter 1 verse 6, the word *epainos* would be better translated "commendation". The verb form of this word, *epaineō*, is used in places like I Corinthians 11:17, where Paul says "Now in this that I declare unto you (*your being contentious*), I praise (*commend*) you not." If something is commendable, it is worthy of confidence, worthy of attention, worthy of approval or of special praise. The first part of Ephesians 1:6 is better understood as: "to the commendation of the glory of his grace". In other words, God is emphasizing that His glorious grace is commendable, worthy of confidence, attention, and special praise.

Let's look at our verse one last time, keeping in mind what we have learned:

### Ephesians

1:6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

By thoroughly considering Ephesians Chapter 1, verse 6, we begin to see the great magnitude of God's grace that He bestowed upon us, making us not only blessed but also highly favored, or accepted. We are God's children. We didn't get it by our own works, but by the grace, the unmerited divine favor, of God, made available to us by the accomplishments of Jesus Christ.

- Dr. Rick Batt