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Ephesians / Ephesians 1:3-14

Ephesians 1:3-14 (Part 1)

Ephesians 1:3-14 “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, **who [The Father]** has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as **he [The Father]** chose us **in him [The Son]** before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before **him [The Father]**. In love **he [The Father]** predestined us for adoption to **himself [The Father]** as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of **his [The Father]** will, to the praise of **his [The Father]** glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the **Beloved [The Son]**. **In him [The Son]** we have redemption through **his [The Son]** blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of **his [The Son]** grace, which **he [The Son]** lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight making known to us the mystery of **his [The Father]** will, according to **his [The**

Father] purpose, which **he [The Father]** set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things **in him [The Son]**, things in heaven and things on earth. **In him [The Son]** we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of **him [The father]** who works all things according to the counsel of **his [The Father]** will, so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of **his [The Son]** glory. **In him [The Son]** you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed **in him [The Son]**, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, **who [The Holy Spirit]** is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of **his** glory **[The Father, Son and Sprit, because all are mention in the last passage vv. 11-14].”**

Review

I don't expect you to remember what we talked about in our last session, but we began with a brief setting of where Ephesus was located—in a very evil city full of

witchcraft and idolatry. The whole sermon revolved around the implication taken from the first two verses, “If you have been called by God, you will be faithful in Christ Jesus.” And basically, what we discussed was that, in the same God had chose Paul for salvation from before he was born, the same way He chose us (the Christians) for salvation before we were born. We also looked at the distinctive requirements of being a New Testament apostle of Jesus Christ. Then we briefly discussed what the will of God is and what it is not. And for that, we looked at the will that man posses, and for that we went to the garden of Eden and we seen that if anyone is to be saved, (contrary to modern thought) God must first overrule mans evil will (which we will briefly expand on tonight). We looked at the audience and the address of this epistle. We also seen that the church at Ephesus, some 30 years later received a warning from Jesus Christ to repent because they had slowly deviated from the truth taught by Paul them; and somewhere, somehow little-by-little they made compromises and thus became hardened to correction and rebuke. So much so, that this

small thing they're letting back into their lives, they may not even have considered it to be a sin. Like the frog getting comfortable to each degree the water is turned up until it's boiled to death. Then in closing, we seen that, the Christian will—by definition—seek to do His *will*! And ended with the words, the *quantity* of the fruit may vary, but *not* the *quality*.

And tonight, we will see the message is similar.

Intro

The passage at hand is a wonderfully constructed passage, in the original this passage is one long sentence. It begins and ends with doxology. It beams forth the triune work of salvation.

In this passage we find, for One, this is a soteriological passage, all five of the metaphors used in the bible that describe salvation are found in this single passage. A) The Deliverance Metaphor: Redemption and Salvation. B) The Renewal Metaphor: Regeneration, Resurrection, New Creation,

and Eternal Life. C) The Penal Metaphor: Justification, Righteousness, and Forgiveness. D) The Transformation Metaphor: Conversion and Holiness. And E) The Family Metaphor: Adoption and Inheritance.

Second, This passage is also a Trinitarian passage. It speaks of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, and the unique roles they have in salvation. Verses 3-6 speak of the Father and His role of Election. Which is tonight's topic. Verses 7-12 speak of the Son and His role of Redemption. Verses 13-14 speak of the Holy Spirit and His role of Applying/Sealing the deal in Salvation. In each section, Paul ends with "praise the Father," "Praise the Son," and "Praise the Spirit."

And Third, this passage is also a Redemption passage. We see the Father Plans Redemption, the Son Secures Redemption, and the Spirit Applies Redemption.

When looking at the Father's, as we will see tonight, He has planned to save His elect people through Jesus Christ. And those who are to be saved the Father has predestined to

be saved from before the foundations of the world. But as we think of that and the controversy around that topic. Instead of asking, “why did God chose to save some and not others?” I want you to ask yourself a different question, a question that, I think, almost never gets asked, and it is this; **“why did God choose to crush His own Son from before the world began?”** That changes the prospective. To save the people He elected for salvation from before time, but also, that those whom He elected would be holy and blameless before Him. May I ask you this, Christian, how are doing with that?

God chose People for salvation from before the foundation of the world so that, they would be holy and blameless before him on that day. Because if He hadn't, all would be cast into hell.

Outline:

1. Chosen by God, in Jesus, Before Time (v.4)
2. He Predestined Us (v.5)

3. To The Glory of God (v.6)

Text: Ephesians 1:3-6

“The work in salvation by the Father”

English Standard Version Chapter 1

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, 4 even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love 5 he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, 6 to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.

1. Chosen by God, in Jesus, Before Time (v.4)

English Standard Version Chapter 1

Verse 3. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, *who* (that's a relative pronoun for God) *has blessed us* (who? v. 1 says "To the saints who...are faithful" the *Christians*) in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places," there is not a single blessing that is withheld from us, however, there are many blessings that have been prepared for the believer's future. Isa 64:6 is quoted in 1 Cor 2:9 which adds to this, Paul says: "But, as it is written, 'What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him.'" As a believer, we are richly blessed on this side of eternity. But, we are told that what eyes have not seen, words cannot tell, hearts can't imagine what great blessings await the Christian on the other side. And these first two words of v. 4 "even as," Paul goes on to describe possibly the greatest blessing that can ever land on a person. And it has absolutely nothing to do

with [you,] the individual it lands on. It is sheer grace. Grace, by definition, is not something you earn, or receive as a result of choosing something. No, but it is given to you for reasons completely outside of yourself. And so, these next two words, “even as” go on to describe the greatest blessing and miracle ever. “even as He (that’s God) chose us (again, Paul is writing to Christians) in Him (that’s Jesus) before the foundations of the world (yes, that’s exactly what it sounds like).”

English Standard Version Chapter 1

Verse 4. even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him.

What does it mean for God to chose people for salvation from before He created the world?

Many Christians disagree with the fact that God chose people for salvation, let alone from before the foundation of the world. Because then, they argue, that on the other hand God has chosen some people for reprobation. “That’s not fair, how is that

just?” they say. But they often neglect to acknowledge the fact that in the same way God chose people for salvation from before the foundation of the world, He chose to sacrifice His own son! (Acts 2:23) They will argue that it is not just that God should choose some for salvation and not others. But then forget that God, in the same way, chose to crush him—the only innocent man who would ever lived—for our sake. How is that just? He didn’t deserve. My brothers, that is mercy! (His mercy is not unjust) What is just and fair is that everyone be cast into hell. Because we actually deserve it. But as verse 6 indicates in the Greek, “we are *objects* of His grace!” Let me point out that we are *dead objects* (Eph 2:1). The object is merely the reception/receiver. You say, “how can a dead object receive His grace?” Good question, I’m glad you asked. God must first give life to the dead object/sinner (Eph 2:5; John 5:21 “For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom he will.”), then with that spiritual resurrection from God, we are saved from the sin and death the Adam plunged us into, and thus, we are made alive to God and

therefore we can and always will chose to receive that life from God once we've been made alive to God, and even that decision is of God (John 6:29; Col 2:13). God also chooses who the objects are. You say, "Oh! How hopeless is that?" No, my friend, what grace is that! Because if God hadn't chosen anyone, then no one would be saved. God has simply chosen a people to lavish His grace upon, and chosen a people to show forth His justice. Election and Reprobation are simply a display of God's attributes. So, God chooses to display one of His attributes on the one party, and another on a different party. Again, you say, "that's not fair." "But who are you, O man, to answer back to God?" Rom 9:20. Remember what happened to Job? He was quickly silenced.

This picture can be well illustrated from a number of passages in the Old and New Testament, but maybe the most profound is found in Romans 9 where Paul again speaks of this issue, only in much greater detail. Just like everyone else, Jacob and Esau where each chosen for something long before they were born, long before they had ever done any good or evil. Verses 11 records, "though

they were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad—in order that God’s purpose of election might continue, not because of works but because of him who calls—” That is, God’s choosing did not depend on their future actions. Because, for example, if God exhaustively knows everything that will ever take place, then can that thing change if He knows it will happen? No! For example, I’m going out for breakfast tomorrow, that is what I have planned, and if God knows I will go, then can I do anything else except what God knows I will do? If you yes, then God didn’t actually know, and God is no longer God and then you end up with a philosophy like Open Theism—which is very, very wrong, maybe even heresy. In short, that view teaches that God does not know everything, especially in regards to the future. But if you say that the only reason God chooses anyone is because He looked down the corridors of time and seen that we would chose Him, and as a result of that, God predestined us, then you misunderstand your own theory and you have a false view of God. Because if indeed God actually knows, then that is exactly what must happen,

because He planned it.

God loved Jacob but hated Esau (Rom 9:13). We like to water it down and say He actually didn't really "hate" Esau, but He just like Jacob a little more. But if you study the life of Esau you will actually noticed that God greatly blessed him almost as if He loved Esau more, he was a very prosperous man. Then Jacob, on the other hand, it almost seems as if God didn't love him at times because God beat Jacob up. Time and time again Jacob was disobedient! His name can even be translated to mean trickster or deceiver! But unlike Esau, Jacob was disciplined. But Esau, as Paul Washer says, "God let Esau be Esau. He let him run wild, there was no restraint to his evil." Sure, God greatly blessed him, but He hated him in that He did not stop him from going after the desires of his heart (which, for all of us are by nature bent towards evil). Instead He gave him over to a reprobate/depraved mind (Rom 1:28). Jacob, however, was beat up every time he sinned. God loved him in that He didn't leave Jacob in his sin. Romans 9:18 says, "So then He has mercy on whomever He wills, and He hardens whomever He

wills.” Do you see that pattern?

I’ll also mention that there was no reason that God should have chosen Jacob over Esau. Because he wasn’t more righteous. If anything, he was far more wicked than Esau. But God simply chose Jacob so that His purpose of election might stand (Rom 9:11). In fact, greater mercy is shown when God chooses to lavish His grace on the more wicked individual.

So, from this passage we see that, in salvation, it is the Father that chooses who will be saved, but why does He choose a people for salvation at all? The text says “that we should be holy and blameless before Him.” Because contrary to that, left to ourselves, none of us are. In fact, we are all inherently evil, we always go astray in our hearts, we all have turned aside, we are all God-hating sinners apart from the grace of God. Why did He choose to save people? So “that we should be holy and blameless before Him.” This is not only directly tied into our sanctification process, but that through His Son, we are justified, and made Holy and therefore have a right to stand before Him as

His own Sons.

2. He Predestined us (v.5)

English Standard Version Chapter 1

Verse 5. In love 5 he *predestined* us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will,

When theologians speak of the technical term “predestination,” they mean two things primarily. First, the sovereignty of God, in the universe. Which, means that God is in absolute control over absolutely everything. There is nothing seen, or unseen that He does not have full control over and nothing comes to pass except what He wills. In the words of the Westminster Confession of Faith, this means that God “freely and unchangeably ordains whatsoever comes to pass.” Second, it deals with the sovereignty of God in salvation. That is, as the Creator, God knows (because He has chosen) who will be saved. **This doctrine only stand if what theologians call Total Depravity is biblical, and we’ll look into that when we get to**

chapter two. In passages like Psalm 115:3 speak of the sovereignty of God in ruling the universe. But in our text, the sovereignty of God is in reference to salvation.

And it is found in the word *predestinate*, it is an incredible word because it denotes the salvation of a believer from beginning to end. This is beautifully demonstrated in Romans 8. It actually speaks of all the stages of salvation in a single passage and how they're all foreknown by God. Not as poetic language, but as factual. Romans 8:28–30 “And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he **foreknew** he also **predestined** to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. **And those whom he **predestined**** (that's the very first stage) **he also **called**** (no one is saved apart from being called—that is why we evangelize—but no one is called to salvation apart from being predestined), **and those whom he **called**** he also **justified** (those who are predestined are called and are justified/forgiven/atoned for), **and those whom he**

justified he also **glorified** (that's past tense, but also, all who are saved are being glorified and will be finally and completely glorified in the end).”

So, to reverse this, no one will be **glorified** (no one will enter heaven) if you are not first **justified** (legally declared right). And no one can be **justified** if you are not first **called/saved**. And no one can be **saved/called** if you are not **predestined** for it. They are all intrinsically linked together. You cannot have one without the other. So, if you are **predestined** then you will be **called** and **justified**, and therefore you will be **glorified**. At this point, you may be asking; “how do I know that I am predestined?” The answer is: “repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ” Acts 20:21, that's a command. And yet, that repentance and faith are both a predetermined *gift* from God (Rom 2:4; Eph 2:8-9). The doctrine of *predestination* and man's responsibility are both clearly taught in the Bible. They do not contradict one another, but compliment each other. In order for you to be able to make that decision, God must first raise you from the dead so you can make that

decision.

So, picture it this way, imagine a circle, it represents this fallen world of sin and death. That is the circle that you and I are born into. And in this circle, as a result of the fall, there is nothing but sin and death. Everything is polluted and corrupted by sin. There is absolutely nothing Holy within this circle. So, the decisions that you and I can make are only related or relative to that which is in this circle of sin and death. This is called *relative freedom of choice*, we can only chose what is relative to our nature (our nature: *dead sinner*). You can make a decision not to commit murder, but that is only because you know of the legal consequences you'll face. Since Adam and Eve, we are all dead spiritually and separated from God.

So, this is how salvation works. From completely outside of the circle, complete foreign to us, God comes—by His own choice—and give you spiritual life—not because you deserve it but because of His own love and choice. Then once you've been made alive to God, you irresistibly chose life because you have been made a new creation. By nature

you can only do what your nature allows, so then, in the same way, once you've been given new life, you can only do what your new nature allows. That's why Jesus said that *you will know them by their fruit*. So, when you've been made alive to God you have been transformed and placed in the circle of righteousness and holiness, and therefore, by your new God-given nature, you can choose to do right in a truly God glorifying way. Does that make sense?

O

O

death

Born in sin/

Resurrected to spiritual life

The greek word that is used for the verb ***Predestinate*** is *proorizo*, which has special reference to that which the subjects of His foreknowledge are predestinated. And this word (*proorizo*), is taken from *proginosko*, which means *to mark out with a boundary*

beforehand, it means *foreknown* or *foreordained*. It is used in the Scriptures in regards to 1) Christ–His death and resurrection, 2) Israel–God’s chosen people, 3) of believers, and 4) human knowledge. Predestination refers to the omniscience of God.

English Standard Version Chapter 1

Verse 5. *according to the purpose of his will,*

The literal translation reads “according to the **good pleasure** of His will.” For context, I’ll read verses 4–5 “even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, ***according to the good pleasure of his will.***”

Let me assure you from the Word of God, there was absolutely no reason that God should have chosen any of us. All of our best deed are as filthy rags before a Holy God. We were all dead in our sin before God saved any of us. We were all dead at the bottom of the ocean, we were certainly not able to grab any rope of salvation. For reasons 100% outside of you and me, God, by His love, and for His own “good pleasure” chose to save a people

for His own glory. Which leads us to our next point.

3. *Why predestination?* To The Glory of God (v.6)

With regard to salvation, there is a very popular teaching out there that says, God has done all that He can to save us—he really, really, wants us all to be saved (and there’s some truth to that) but, (apparently this is the only thing God cannot do) He just cannot overrule our evil human free will. So, God has *provided* salvation (or made salvation *possible*) they say, and now it is wholly and completely left up to us to make that decision to accept Jesus into our heart and be saved. Then, once we’ve made that decision (or got saved), they say, we have to live a really good life (we believe that, but for a different reason) because if we don’t, they say that we’ll lose the salvation God worked so hard to provide for us—It’s completely in our hands. Or, the other extreme that says,

once you've made that decision, you can live however you please, because your salvation cannot be lost, and thus, they use the grace of God as an excuse to sin.

What's wrong with that teaching? One of the many things that is so wrong with that, is that it makes it all about man. It says God is not sovereign enough to overrule man's will, and man is powerful enough to resist God. This teaching places man at the center of the universe, it elevates man to the throne. And completely overlooks and rejects the biblical doctrine of the sinfulness of man. It completely ignores that man is utterly unable to make any morally upright decision apart from God-given life. It denies that man is *dead* in sin. You see how attracting that is to the spiritually dead?

But maybe you are wondering why God chose to save us specifically through predestination. The answer is found in verse 6. "To the praise of His glorious grace, with which He has blessed us in the Beloved."

"To the praise of His glorious grace." This is a prepositional phrase that indicates the purpose of the blessing, the ultimate goal,

the greatest reason for anything—the glory of God.

“With which He has blessed us in the Beloved.” This is a relative (adjective) clause that modify “grace,” and it explains *how* or *in what way* this grace is glorious and effective. “Has blessed” is a verbal phrase in the *present perfect tense*. That means that, His grace is, in one aspect, presently completed in us, in that it has been applied to us. “Us” which is, the *direct object* of His blessing of grace. We—the christians (“us”)—are the direct object of His grace. But what is His grace, or better asked, *who* is His grace? Look at the next words “in the Beloved” that is a prepositional phrase specifying the sphere or location of the blessing, which is referring to Jesus Christ! That means that we can only be blessed in Jesus Christ and His accomplished work on our behalf. He is the blessing. Jesus is the grace that God has loved us with, it’s not because of you and me, but because of Grace, which is a *person* and that person is Jesus Christ. So, the only reason God loves us, is because He first loved His own son, and only through His Son can we be loved with an everlasting love. Only then, can all the

glory can be given to God, from beginning to end.

The only way salvation can be “to the praise of His glorious grace (Jesus)” is if the God plans and accomplishes salvation from beginning to end, which makes it all about God, and therefore all glory goes to God, because the Father has planned it, the Son carries it out, and the Holy Spirit applies it. I believe, only when salvation is explained in this way can all the glory legitimately be given to the triune God.

Conclusion

Predestination is not an excuse to sin.

Some Christians may think that because we are chosen of God that means we can continue living the way we please, and that if we are chosen anyway we will be saved no matter what. But that is a false view of God, and a false view of predestination and salvation, and it is a heretical view, because that's found in the bible. What the text says is that we have been Predestined so that we would be “holy and blameless before Him”. That is speaking of our sanctification—which

is the evidence of having been predestined for salvation. Remember Romans 8? You cannot have one without the other. So, if you are being sanctified, then that is evidence that you have been predestined. That is evidence that the greatest blessing that God has and will ever grant to man, is in you. That blessing is Grace—Jesus Christ. What a reason to boast in God!

Maybe you are having a difficult time with this doctrine because, maybe, you're wrestling with the same thing I have. "How do I know that I'm predestined for grace?" Then simply obey the command to repent and believe the gospel of Jesus Christ for the remission of sin, and you will be saved. In summary, how can you know you are predestined for grace? Have you repented and placed your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ? You say, "I'm not sure." Well examine yourself. The evidence that you have repented, is that you are still repenting. Are you growing in your personal relationship with Jesus Christ? Do you see fruit in your everyday life? Have repented and are you are activity killing sin? If you say, "Yes." Then that is proof that God has saved you. But if you

say “No.” Then I fear for you because you are in danger of hell fire. Do not leave here tonight until you have repented and placed your faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, because you may not make it home. But God is faithful, because all who cry out to Him, will be saved! Don’t worry about how God has chosen to save a person, just obey what He has commanded you to do! Repent and believe in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour and you will be saved.

Let’s pray: Father, thank You for Your wonderful plan of salvation. Thank You for loving a people unlovable—where it not for Your Son. Thank You for saving a people unsaveable—were it not for your Son. Thank You for choosing a people undesirable—were it not for Your Son. Thank You for Grace, thank You for Jesus Christ. I pray, Lord, that if there are any weary hell bound souls listening to this, would You work in their hearts and lead them to repentance and faith, for the glory of Jesus Christ. Lord, gather Your people from across the nations for the advancement of Your kingdom. Thank You, Father. In Jesus’ name. Amen.