

He Chose...The History of Election

*God At Work Long Before You Knew It!
So Remember, Rest and Rejoice!*

Ephesians 1.4

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By:
Danny Ovalle

READ EPHESIANS 1:3-14

Let's Begin here:

There was a lot going on in this world long before you realized it. Yes, No?

A Picture in the Womb!

Psalms 139:13-16 For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. (14) I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. (15) My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, (16) your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.

Entering Haverhill: Established 1689

Last week we began to examine in further detail that there are incredible “spiritual blessings” that have been secured for us by God, through Jesus Christ, which cause us to magnify & praise God in such a fitting manner as this opening passage unfolds.

The Greatest Possible Praise: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ”

To The Greatest Possible Blessor: “who has blessed us in Christ” ...blessed, not cursed!

For The Greatest Possible Blessings: “with every spiritual blessing” ...comprehensive!

In The Greatest Possible Place: “in the heavenly places” ...for time & eternity!

Where is Your Supreme Delight, Material or Spiritual?

The Supremacy of the Spirit Over the Flesh!

This morning we want to ask the why question. We want to ask How is this kind of rejoicing possible? How is it that we get to experience such “blessings” and truly not get what we really

deserve - as we frail, small, prideful creatures stand before such a Holy and Righteous God!

What is the grounding of our being blessed by God?

Has it to do with how good I am? How many good things I have done, so that He must now bless me? Is it because I attend church, or serve in this ministry or that? I am I the cause of His grace...or is He the cause of His grace?

What is the reason Paul gives for God's rich blessings?

Here is the Amazing Grace of God at work in His showing Himself as God in His free choice to even save sinners!

This morning, we shall behold:

1. God chose to save...PERIOD! Before the foundation of the world!(Eph 1.4)
2. God chose to save... begins...in the Garden of Eden (Gen 3.15)
3. God chose to save... continues...Abram, the idolater (Josh 24.2)

As we are taking out time to work through this opening long sentence of Ephesians 1, we want to notice how phrases connect. As we looked at verse 3 last week, we see the sentence continues into verse 4 with an explanation as to the reason why we are so blessed by God and join in this anthem of praise to Him!

Why have you so blessed me? Because...For...even as...

Here is the foundation regarding such a great salvation...God chose us in Him!

We didn't choose God, He first chose us!

He didn't choose us because He saw us choose Him...no, that would make us the first movers!

God is always the first mover...the initiator...as we shall see, (1)before the world was ever formed, (2)in the garden when our first ancestors rebelled hardcore...and (3)how the "father of faith" came into being!

Here is this passage it is clear that God is God. His work is based solely "according to the counsel of His will."

(Ephesians 1:5) he predestined us for adoption through Jesus Christ, **according to the purpose of his will,**

(Ephesians 1:7) In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, **according to the riches of his grace,**

(Ephesians 1:9) making known to us the mystery of his will, **according to his purpose,** which he set forth in Christ

(Ephesians 1:11) In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined **according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will,**

(Ephesians 1:19) and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, **according to the working of his great might**

(Ephesians 3:7) Of this gospel I was made a minister **according to the gift of God's grace**, which was given me by the working of his power.

(Ephesians 3:11) This was **according to the eternal purpose** that he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord,

(Ephesians 3:16) that **according to the riches of his glory** he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being,

(Ephesians 3:20) Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, **according to the power at work within us**,

(Ephesians 4:7) But grace was given to each one of us **according to the measure of Christ's gift**.

Here is His God-ness being exalted!

Do you exalt His God-ness? Do you find rest that God is God, and you're not? Does that sit well with you, or do you find that basic Christian truth hard to swallow?

Be still, and know that God is God! (Psalms 46:10) "Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!"

Let's look at these 3 headings:

1. God chose to save...PERIOD! Before the foundation of the world!(Eph 1.4)

(John 17:24) Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me **before the foundation of the world**.

(Ephesians 1:4) even as he chose us in him **before the foundation of the world**, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love

(1 Peter 1:20) He was foreknown **before the foundation of the world** but was made manifest in the last times for your sake,

(Revelation 13:8) All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast—all whose names have not been written in the book of life belonging to the Lamb **that was slain from the creation of the world**.

(Revelation 13:8) and all who dwell on earth will worship it, everyone whose name has not been written **before the foundation of the world** in the book of life of the Lamb that was slain.

(John 20:21) Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has **sent me**, I am sending you."

(John 5:36) But the testimony that I have is greater than that of John. **For the works that the Father has given me to accomplish**, the very works that I am doing, bear witness about me that **the Father has sent me**.

"God the Father has sent me" "He came from Heaven to earth..."

2. God chose to save... begins...in the Garden of Eden (Gen 3.15)

Genesis 3:14-15 So the LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, "Cursed are you above all the livestock and all the wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life. (15) And **I will** put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."

This is in the context of "cursing" the serpent, woman and man...yet this promise isn't even given to the man & woman, but to the serpent.

This is how outside of us, salvation really is. It is not our doing, willing or striving, but of grace alone!

And this promise if followed by Divine action:

Genesis 3:21 The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them.

Do you see God PROMISE and ACT to save! Do you see the shadow of substitution here? Clothing?

3. God chose to save... continues...Abram, the idolater(Josh 24.2)

Joshua 24:2-4 Joshua said to all the people, "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'Long ago your forefathers, including Terah the father of Abraham and Nahor, lived beyond the River and worshiped other gods. (3) But I took your father Abraham from the land beyond the River and led him throughout Canaan and gave him many descendants. I gave him Isaac, (4) and to Isaac I gave Jacob..."

NOTE: The promise comes to Isaac, not Ishmael...to the son of promise, not the son born in the ordinary way...this speaks of the miraculous, not ordinary...only the work of God!

The Promise comes to Jacob, not Easu...

Romans 9:11-12 Yet, before the twins were born or had done anything good or bad—in order that God's purpose in election might stand: (12) not by works but by him who calls—she was told, "The older will serve the younger."

CONCLUSION

Back to our title:

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So Remember, Rest and Rejoice!

Paul is reminding these Ephesians, and thus us too who likewise believe in Jesus, that God is close. He is in charge. He is good, from start to finish, and He has loved you with an everlasting love, in spite of yourself, your sin and you failure!

1 John 4:10 This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.

“What matters supremely is not, in the last analysis, the fact that I know God, but the larger fact which underlies it—the fact that *he knows me*. I am graven on the palms of his hands. I am never out of his mind.

All my knowledge of him depends on his sustained initiative in knowing me. I know him because he first knew me, and continues to know me. He knows me as a friend, one who loves me; and there is not a moment when his eye is off me, or his attention distracted from me, and no moment, therefore, when his care falters.

This is momentous knowledge. There is unspeakable comfort—the sort of comfort that energizes, be it said, not *enervates* (tires out, weakens)—in knowing that God is constantly taking knowledge of me in love and watching over me for my good. There is tremendous relief in knowing that his love to me is utterly realistic, based at every point on prior knowledge of the worst about me, so that no discovery now can disillusion him about me, in the way I am so often disillusioned about myself, and quench his determination to bless me.

There is, certainly, great cause for humility in the thought that he sees all the twisted things about me that my fellow humans do not see (and I am glad!), and that he sees more corruption in me than that which I see in myself (which, in all conscience, is enough). There is, however, equally great incentive to worship and love God in the thought that, for some unfathomable reason, He wants me as His friend, and desires to be my friend, and has given His Son to die for me in order to realize this purpose.”

- J.I. Packer, *Knowing God*, IVP, p.37