

## **HARVEST ROCK CHURCH**

---

### **G.R.A.C.E: GOD'S RICHES AT CHRIST'S EXPENSE (EPHESIANS 1:4-14) STUDY IN THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS**

**Dr. Ché Ahn**

**February 12, 2023**

**TEXT: Ephesians 1:4 Just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love 5 He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, 6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. 7 In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace 8 which He lavished on us. In all wisdom and insight 9 He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him 10 with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, *that is*, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth. In Him 11 also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will, 12 to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ would be to the praise of His glory. 13 In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation — having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, 14 who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of *God's own* possession, to the praise of His glory.**

**INTRO:** In the letter to the Ephesians, Apostle Paul deals with big-issue theological topics that are in many ways unsearchable and unfathomable to understand. We try to understand predestination, election, and what it means to be chosen. How does this work? If you are predestined to be saved, then that implies that others are not. Does God choose some to be saved and some to be damned?

You have brilliant theologians who have debated this fundamental issue for over 1,500 years, beginning with Augustine of Hippo (modern-day Algeria, AD 396–430) and Pelagius of Roman Britain (AD 354–418). Augustine emphasized the sovereignty of God in salvation, whereas Pelagius emphasized man's ability to have faith in God and that it was a choice of one's will. During the Protestant Reformation, the debate developed between John Calvin, who emphasized God's predestination of salvation, and Jacobus Arminius, who emphasized that all can be saved. Today you still have two schools of theology of salvation. One is called



Calvinism or Reformed Theology because John Calvin was one of the reformers of the Protestant Reformation, along with Martin Luther. The other school is called Arminianism, based on Calvin's contemporary Jacobus Arminius, who believed in free will and God's will that all be saved, and anyone who chooses to repent and believe will be saved. John Wesley championed this theology, so today this is called Arminian theology or Wesleyan theology. I personally espouse the latter, but I also have struggled with my theology because you have so many Bible verses that support the Reformed position of predestination.

Augustine taught that man could do little right (total depravity). Thus, he reasoned, man cannot even accept the offer of salvation—it must be God who chooses for Himself individuals to bring to salvation. Thus, predestination was born.

The Christian Reformed Church came out with this statement in 1987: “Before the foundation of the world, by sheer grace, according to the free good pleasure of his will, [God] chose in Christ to salvation a definite number of particular people out of the entire human race which had fallen by its own fault from its original innocence into sin and ruin.”

I believe in classical Arminianism affirming total depravity (man is born a sinner), but he still has a God-given free will to choose to accept Jesus as His Lord and Savior and become born again by His grace. I believe that Jesus died out of love for the whole world and not just for the elect (which is called limited atonement, espoused by Calvin and Reformed theologians), but He died so that everyone who calls upon the name of Jesus as Lord will be saved and have eternal life.

## I. BLESSINGS FROM GOD THE FATHER

### A. HE CHOSE US TO BE HOLY AND BLAMELESS BEFORE HIM

1. **Ephesians 1:4 Just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him.**
2. I could be totally wrong, but I do not embrace a Reformed Calvinistic theology of election and predestination.
3. Why? The issue of the free will. At the heart of the debate is that I believe that God has given us the freedom to choose, or a free will. We can choose to love God or not love Him, to believe and obey Him or not follow Him. If He made us into little robots or puppets, we are not made in the image and likeness of God.
4. The issue of other passages of Scripture that would contradict predestination and election. For example, John 3:16. Or **1 Timothy 2:1 First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions, and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, 2 for kings and all who are in authority, so that we**



may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. **3 This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, 4 who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.**

5. **2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.**
6. The final problem is the fruit of this doctrine. The belief in predestination and election, as the Reformed theologian espouses, causes passivity and fatalism in the church when it comes to the Great Commission and praying for souls to be saved. Why bother if God has already predestined some to be saved and some to be damned?
7. It also formed the erroneous theological foundation of slavery in America. It is interesting that George Whitefield believed in predestination but also believed in slavery, which is understandable. When you believe that some are chosen to be saved and others are not, it also stands to reason that some are chosen and born to be slaves, and some are chosen to be free. John Wesley, who was not a Reformed theologian, did not believe in predestination and was totally against slavery and an activist for the abolition of slavery. It was the Methodists who followed the theology of John Wesley that fought against the evils of slavery, like William Wilberforce. So too, the 1857-1858 Prayer Revival and the Second Great Awakening, which preceded the Civil War and the Emancipation Proclamation, were catalyzed by the great revivalist Charles Finney, who was Wesleyan in theology and anti-Calvinist.
8. So, I don't believe that this passage is about the doctrine of election, that is, some are elected to be saved and others are elected to be damned.
9. I believe that this is God's overarching plan that He wanted a people made in the image of God to be like Him before the foundation of the world. But sin entered into the world. So, Jesus came to die for the sins of the world, and those who freely believe in Him will not perish but become born again. These people are now considered the church; **those who come to Christ are the "chosen" ones. These are the elected ones.**
10. He has chosen a people to be holy and blameless before Him. He has not individually chosen us because God has always had, before the foundation of the world, a purpose to have people who are holy, blameless, and who would rule with Him.

## **B. HE HAS ADOPTED US**

1. **Ephesians 1:5 He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will**



2. The word “predestined” is not for unbelievers. It is always in reference to believers in the Bible.
3. The word means “to ordain beforehand” or “to predetermine.”
4. **The word says in Romans 8:29 For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son**
5. **He has predestined us to be adopted.** God’s purpose from the beginning was not just to forgive humanity for their sins. But to everyone who believes, He would adopt them as His sons and conform them into the image of Jesus. This has nothing to do with those who have been predestined to be saved or not be saved.
6. Why adopt us? Are we not born again to His family? Yes, by the new birth, God is now your Father. But a baby doesn’t receive an inheritance. An adopted son can and should! This doesn’t mean that you have to be an old saint to enjoy your inheritance; you can enjoy it now.
7. Sue and I felt that our kids don’t have to wait until we pass away to receive their inheritance, but they can receive their inheritance now, and that is why we helped them buy their own homes.

### C. HE HAS GIVEN US HIS GRACE

1. **Ephesians 1:6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.**
2. The word “bestowed” is the Greek word *charitoō*, “to bestow favor on.”
3. He “be-graced” us.
4. In this context, grace is God’s unmerited favor.

## II. BLESSINGS FROM JESUS, GOD THE SON

### A. JESUS HAS REDEEMED US

1. **Ephesians 1:7a In Him we have redemption through His blood...**
2. To redeem is to purchase and set free by paying a price.
3. There were 60 million slaves, and theoretically you could buy a slave and set that slave free. No one really did that because of the expense involved, but Jesus did exactly this for us. The price was His own blood.
4. **1 Peter 1:18 knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, 19 but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ.**
5. **He has set us free from the bondage of sin (Romans 6).**

6. He has set us free from the world: Galatians 1:4 who gave Himself for our sins so that He might rescue us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father
7. He has set us free from Satan's Kingdom: Colossians 1:13 For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son

#### **B. JESUS HAS FORGIVEN US**

1. Ephesians 1:7b the forgiveness of our trespasses...
2. To forgive means to carry away. It is a reference to the Day of Atonement where the High Priest had two goats. One goat he killed and sprinkled the blood of the goat on the Mercy Seat. The other goat, he laid his hands on the goat's head, confessed the sins of Israel, and released the goat into the wilderness, never to be found again. He carries away our sins never to condemn us again.
3. Psalm 103:12 As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.

#### **C. JESUS HAS REVEALED HIS WILL TO US**

1. Ephesians 1:9 He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him 10 with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, *that is*, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth. In Him
2. The word "mystery" has nothing to do with things eerie. It means a "sacred secret" once hidden but now revealed to God's people. We are now part of God's family, and He is revealing His purposes to us. And what is that purpose?
3. He is uniting heaven on earth in Christ. This will be when Jesus comes back and creates a new heaven and new earth, but they will be one in Jesus.
4. Revelation 21:1 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer *any* sea. 2 And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, 4 and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be *any* death; there will no longer be *any* mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away."

5 And He who sits on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." And He said, "Write, for these words are faithful and true." 6 Then He said to me, "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning, and the end. I will give to the one who thirsts from the spring of the water of life without cost. 7 He who overcomes will inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son."

#### **D. JESUS HAS GIVEN US AN INHERITANCE**

1. Ephesians 1:11 also we have obtained an inheritance
2. Ephesians 1:18 *I pray that* the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what the hope of His calling is, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,
3. 1 Peter 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to *obtain* an inheritance *which is* imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you.

### **III. BLESSINGS FROM GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT**

#### **A. THE HOLY SPIRIT HAS SEALED US**

1. Ephesians 1:13 In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation — having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise
2. Here is the entire process of salvation. You heard the Gospel, the message of truth, you believed, and the Holy Spirit entered into your life and did the work of salvation.
3. "The seal" speaks of a finished transaction. Like receiving a graduation certificate that comes with a seal that you have graduated, it is official.
4. The seal also speaks of ownership and protection. So, the believer belongs to God.
5. The seal speaks of authenticity.
6. Romans 8:9 However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him.

#### **B. THE HOLY SPIRIT HAS GIVEN US A DOWN PAYMENT**

1. Ephesians 1:14 who is given as a pledge of our inheritance.
2. It is like giving a down payment of 99% of the value of the property. It is a done deal.



3. He has given us the most precious gift, the Holy Spirit, to show you that all His promises are yes and amen!
4. What a generous triune God. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit is involved in your salvation!

