

Pastor Jeremy M. Thomas
Fredericksburg Bible Church
107 East Austin
Fredericksburg, Texas 78624
830-997-8834 jthomas@fbgbible.org

C0418 -- May 5, 2004 -- Ephesians 1:4 -- Election: Definition

Last week we looked at Eph. 1:3 which is the introduction and summary of the longest sentence in the Greek NT (vv. 3-14). This is a eulogy or “blessing” section. Paul usually begins with a prologue and follows it by a prayer of thanksgiving but Paul deviates from his normal structure and interjects with a “blessing” section which constitutes vv. 3-14.

GOD IS BLESSED

“Blessed is the God...”. “Blessed” is the verbal adjective **eulogetos** comes from two words **eu** and **logeō**. **eu** meaning “well or good” and **logeō** meaning “to speak of”. So, **eulogetos** means “to speak well of”. God is spoken well of. Why? For two reasons: his intrinsic character and because of what He has done for us.

First, His intrinsic character (SRJLOOOIE). Notice that God’s character is immutable, it never changes. This is why the Trinity is necessary. If God was one and there was no Trinity then who would God love? Himself? That’s not true love. It is essential that God be a Triunity because if He were not, He could not really be loving, could He? This is revealed in Jesus’ prayer of John 17:24. So, God is a God of love whether there was a plan of salvation or there wasn’t a plan of salvation. This reveals that the plan of salvation is first and foremost a revelation of God’s character. It is not first and foremost about saving all men. vv. 3-14 are a revelation of God’s love to man through the plan of salvation. Salvation is not first and foremost about saving you. It’s first and foremost about God. He chose to reveal His character to us through the plan of salvation. Hopefully you’re going to see this in vv. 3-14 when we start to look at predestination and election. These are revelatory devices, devices that reveal the character of God to His creatures. The thing we’re going to discover is that the plan of salvation has as its priority the revelation of divine essence and not to save all men. Now that’s the big point: salvation of all men is a second priority. If you grasp that then you can understand how God can work sovereignly while he predestinates and elects. B/c His greatest priority is to reveal Himself to His creatures, this is the process of glorification; secondarily in

the process, salvation for all men. This is why Hell has a design in the plan of salvation; to reveal God's character.

The *second* reason God is spoken well of is because of what He has done for us. What has He done for us? Vv. 4-14 explain what He's done for us: He's elected us, He's predestined us, He's sent His Son to be a Sacrifice for us, and He's given us the sealing ministry of the Holy Spirit to secure us. This is why God is spoken well of.

GOD BLESSES US

But then in v. 3 we find that God "speaks well of us". Paul uses the same word **eulogia** to describe God's giving us every spiritual blessing. Why does God "speak well of us?" Because we are "in Christ". Not because of who you are. Not because God looked down and saw something very attractive about you. The whole point is that you can be blessed by God because you are in union with the 2nd person of the trinity. It's because you are united to Him that you share His blessing. This concept is one which will come in and help us understand predestination and election. For God to "speak well of" you, you have to get into that circle of the Trinity somehow. The way we do that is by being in union with the 2nd person of the Trinity, Jesus Christ. "has blessed" is a Constantive Aorist. When did God bless you? In time or before time? The answer is that He blessed us before time, vv. 4-5 fill in the details by using the phrase "before the foundation of the world", this is eternity past. He blessed you before you were saved. This time is what theologians call the Divine Decree which is the Trinity's counsel in eternity past when they laid out the plan of salvation. There is a logical order to the plan of salvation that was set out in eternity past by the Trinity and this plan is the most fantastic thing in the history of the entire universe. So, you were blessed in eternity past. Whenever you accepted Christ, you merely assumed the position He had planned for you all along. So, the great thing about this is that a lot of Christians are scared of these words in vv. 4-5 and yet you shouldn't be because you should realize that this is blessing. These truths tell you that the plan of God can never fail. It's impossible for the plan of God to fail, because from all eternity He has planned on you being here and for you assuming every spiritual blessing. And it's always been in the books from all eternity. Nothing can change about this. This should be a real source of security and certainty as to the stability of the plan of salvation. What has he blessed you with?

WITH EVERY SPIRITUAL BLESSING

So, you have every “spiritual blessing”. Spiritual indicates the type or nature of the blessing. The blessing is spiritual not physical. Israel under Joshua was given physical land. Everywhere they stepped foot the land had already been given to them. Things which are spiritual pertain to the Spirit of God and have their source in the Creator in contrast to that which is earthly and has its source in the created order.

What are the mechanics of spiritual perception?

POSSESSIONS, ENEMIES, AND WAY OF VICTORY

Israel had land that they possessed but they also had enemies of flesh and blood that tried to keep them from possessing the land. God gave them the way of victory, faith in the word of God. As Church age believers we have been given every spiritual blessing and we have enemies in the demonic realm, not of flesh and blood, but they want to dispossess you of your spiritual blessings. They want you to fail in the Christian life. But there is a way of victory for you too and it has to do with faith in the word of God.

RESPONSES TO SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS:

There were 3 possible responses to the spiritual blessings; 1) if you are a new or immature believer you may have never heard this truth and so you can go positive now, claiming these blessings and living a victorious Christian life or you can go negative and experience defeat like Joshua and Israel. 2) if you are a mature believer then you may have been zealous for the word and growing like a weed at one time. Doctrine was your life and you lived it but at some point, you dried up spiritually and now you're in the toolies somewhere. You thought you knew it all or you thought that the teaching was so good you didn't need daily personal bible study. You do! You need to spend time daily with the Lord in His word. I can't do it for you. I can't carry you spiritually. No one can carry you spiritually. You are responsible for you! You can go positive or negative to the spiritual blessings. It's up to you. 3) If you are an unbeliever you don't have any spiritual blessings You need the gospel. Your sins have been paid for by the person of Jesus Christ and if you'll simply believe in His substitutionary payment of your sins today, you'll have every spiritual blessing that every believer in the world tonight possesses.

WHERE ARE THE BLESSINGS?

They are “in the heavenlies. We looked at the three heavens, the Atmospheric Heaven where the birds and precipitation come from. Then we looked at the 2nd heaven: The Starry heaven where the sun, moon, stars, and other planets are located. Finally, we looked at the 3rd heaven: The Highest Heaven, the *shamayim shamayim* or “Heaven of Heavens”. This is what Paul calls the 3rd Heaven. This where our spiritual blessings are located because this is where the ascended Lord Jesus Christ is located. This is also where our spiritual foes of darkness are. But let me show you one more verse to show you that Christ sits far above these powers of darkness. Turn to Eph.1:20-21 READ. See, you are victorious even though your foes are in the same heaven because Christ is “far above” these foes. According to Eph. 3:10 the good angels are also in this 3rd Heaven and this is necessary because there is an Angelic Conflict going on between the good and evil angels according to Daniel 12:1-2. Finally, we discovered that at the middle of the tribulation Satan will be kicked out of the 3rd heaven so that he no longer will have access to the courtroom of God where he accuses us day and night.

2. The Basis of Spiritual Blessings (1:4-14)

a. God’s Election for Himself (1:4-6)

Greek Text: 1:4-5 kaqw.j evxele,xato h`ma/j evn auvtw/| pro. katabolh/j ko,smou ei=nai h`ma/j a`gi,ouj kai. avmw,mouj katenw,pion auvtou/ evn avga,ph(5 proori,saj h`ma/j eivj ui`oqesi,an dia. VIhsou/ Cristou/ eivj auvtou,n(kata. th.n euvdoki,an tou/ qelh,matoj auvtou/(

Translation: 1:4-5 because He chose us (for Himself) in Him before the foundation of the world to be holy and faultless before Him in love, 5 having predestined us to adoption through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,

Review: After stating that God is “praised”, having given to each saint every spiritual blessing he gives the reason God is “praised” in vv. 4-14. God is to be praised for the work of the Trinity in Redemption. God the Father is the one who “predestined us” and “chose us” (vv. 4-6), God the Son is the one who was a sacrifice for us (vv. 7-11), and God the Spirit is the one who sealed us (vv. 12-14). This three-fold division is obvious in the text because of the inclusion of the three

persons of the Godhead and because there is a similar refrain at the end of each section (COMPARE 1:6, 12, 14).

Foreview: In vv. 4-6 it is best to see these works as those of the Father even though the Father is not named in this section. The reasons are two-fold; *first*, because God has already been called Father in v. 2, *second*, because the Son is mentioned in vv. 7-11 and the Spirit is mentioned in vv. 12-14, *third*, because Ephesians is a strongly Trinitarian letter (cf. 1:17; **2:18**, 22; 3:4-5, 14-17; 4:4-6; 5:18-20). It seems best then to understand vv. 4-6 as being the Father's work in Redemption. That work consists of three main things; election (v. 4), predestination (v. 5), and resultant praise (v. 6).

Commentary: 1:4. kaqw.j, "because". The **kathos** is an adverbial conjunction often translated "just as" which would then refer to the "manner" in which God the Father has blessed the believer. However, **kathos** can also be translated as "because" which would not indicate "manner" but the "reason" God is blessed (v. 3...Blessed is the God and Father...) This seems like the best rendering. We might ask from v. 3 "why is God blessed?" and here Paul is giving us the answer, God is blessed *because* "He chose us". Turn to Eph. 4:32 for the same use of **kathos**. This is a well-known verse having been put to song: "Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, *just as* God in Christ also has forgiven you." If "just as" is the proper translation of **kathos** then this verse would mean that we are to forgive each other in the same manner as God in Christ forgave you. In what manner did Christ forgive you? He forgave you by going to death on the cross, having nailed your sins to the tree". But we cannot forgive each other in this way. We are not to forgive others *in the same manner* that Christ forgave us. We are rather to forgive others *because* Christ forgave us. Because of the grace shown us we ought to forgive others is Paul's point! In both 1:4 and 4:32 the adverbial conjunction **kathos** should be translated "because" rather than "just as". The reason we are to forgive others is because Christ forgave us. In the same way in 1:4 **God is blessed because of His choosing us** and not in the same manner as His choosing us (which makes little sense).

evxelexato h`ma/j "He chose us (for Himself)". **Exelexato** is the Aorist Middle Indicative of the Greek word **eklegomai** which comes from two Greek words, **ek** meaning "out" and **lego** meaning "to say or speak". So, the word means "to speak out of". I know that election is a difficult and sometimes heart wrenching truth. It's not uncommon to find that a discussion about "election" makes people madder than

a hornet. So, I want you to prepare yourself spiritually to perceive this truth. People are either for it or against it. Every believer struggles with it because his nature, since the fall is stirred up against it. Notice the tense, it is Aorist meaning point action in the past. When in the past, in time or before time? Paul locates the choice before time when he says “before the foundation of the world”. Paul also teaches this in 2 Thess. 2:13 (READ) very clearly. What He chose us for was “salvation” and this choice took place in eternity past. If we understand man’s nature as totally depraved this is a very comforting truth. If we reject man’s nature as totally depraved then this truth is typically despised. I think it is essential that we understand that man is totally depraved, but I am not too fond of the term “totally” because it makes man sound “all bad” and that’s not what we’re trying to communicate. I prefer comprehensively depraved because that term designates more clearly what is truly meant. The word depraved is used in Romans 1:28 READ. It’s the Greek word **adokimos** which means “to fail the test”. In this context Paul is saying that the natural man has a mind that “fails the test”, a mind that is not able to do that which is proper. So, *when we say man is comprehensively depraved, we are saying that every facet of man’s being is affected and every facet of man “fails the test” in respect to pleasing God.* Man fails the test of pleasing God. We have no merit in God’s sight. We have no legal claim on God so that He had to choose us. This is why God, of His own volition, without respect to how good a boy you are, elected some. If He didn’t no one would be saved. I know this is a hard truth to accept because we struggle with our human nature since the Fall. Every inclination in our hearts is stirred up against such a concept. But this is what the Scriptures teach. However, I think it is easier to understand and accept when we understand our true position as depraved individuals. In fact, I think election brings great comfort when we understand who we were. Romans 3:9-11 explain clearly that human beings come short of the glory of God and do not even seek him READ. *Depravity is our condition in history, election is God’s plan to remedy such a condition before history.* This is why He is “blessed”. This is why we praise Him, because He provided a means of escaping our depraved condition and spending eternity with Him. Let’s look at the word some more, just to get a good handle on the Greek word and the contexts it is used in. What I have concluded is that this doctrine is very comforting. Election should not be considered antagonistically by the believer. It should be something that results in praise and thanksgiving to God.

Now, when we come to vv. 4-5, we first find that **eklegomai** is the only finite verb in a relative clause in vv. 4-14. The main verb is in v. 5 “predestination” (*proorizo*). So, you’ve got the finite verb in v. 4 and the main verb in v. 5. What this means is

that the finite verb is either *logically* subsequent to the main verb or the main verb is the *cause* of the finite verb. What this means is that three interpretations are possible grammatically; 1) predestination precedes election logically in the eternal counsels of God or 2) predestination, the idea that God pre-planned a destiny is the reason God elected. Or it could be a combination of both. Logically predestination preceded and is the reason God elected some men. The latter is the best explanation. God prepared a destiny beforehand and because of that He elected some people. Predestination has more to do with the *what*, election more with the *who*. Predestination doesn't really have to do with people so much, it rather has to do with people's destiny. He pre-planned a destiny for you. Election has to do with the people themselves who will enjoy that destiny. So, logically v. 5 precedes v. 4. For the full sequence, at least logically, turn to Rom. 8:28-30. Now, you don't see election in there, but where it fits is after predestination and before called. **FOREKNEW, PREDESTINED, ELECTED, CALLED, JUSTIFIED, GLORIFIED.** That's the order the NT places on these acts of God. Even though predestination precedes (logically) election we're going to go ahead and look at election. In the coming weeks we'll look at predestination.

CLASSICAL USAGE

The word as used in the classical Greek authors, in the active, means "to pick out" or "single out". In the passive it means "to be selected or chosen". In the middle it means "to pick out for oneself", "to choose", or "to select". For example, Aristophanes uses it to describe one selectively picking out or pulling out one's gray hairs.

LXX USAGE (with apocrypha)

The word occurs 141 times in the LXX.¹ Of the LXX usage it may be said that the subject chose in light of all known options and that his choice was made freely and not due to dislike of the other option or because the other option had some legal claim on the one making the choice. In the majority of uses God is the subject.² Koine Usage (330BC-330AD) is the same.³

¹ Root word search of the Bibleworks LXX Morphology (BLM) text using BibleWorks5 Computer Software.

² Op. cit., 186.

³ Op. cit., 186.

NEW TESTAMENT USAGE

Very few people actually take the time to look at every usage of the Greek word **eklegomai** in the NT so that is exactly what we are going to do. We're going to have a Bible drill. I want you to see every reference to election in the NT. What you're going to notice is that not all of these passages are in the context of salvation. Many of them are in contexts that don't bother people much. Another reason I'm doing this is because I want you to see that I'm not hiding anything from you. The word is used 22 times in the Critical Text and 21 times in the Majority Text. The difference is Luke 9:35 which we'll look at in a moment. First, turn to

Luke 6:13 READ. Here what we observe is that Jesus called His disciples (plural) and chose out of that larger group 12 men to become apostles. So, here Jesus made a choice knowing all the options, so it was not arbitrary but based on knowledge. There is nothing in this text which indicates that Jesus disliked those He did not choose. The verb is in the middle voice which means that there was a personal interest involved. He chose these 12 for Himself. Notice that election in this text is not to salvation, it is to apostleship. Jesus chose out of His disciples which were a mixed group of believers and unbelievers. Obviously, Judas was chosen as an apostle but not chosen for salvation. We'll see more about this text in Acts 1:24 when the word "elect" is used again to replace Judas.

Luke 9:35 READ. The best manuscripts, the Majority Text read "This is My beloved Son!" (cf. KJV) not "This is My Son, My Chosen One!" However, there is no English translation based on the Majority Text. Although there are scholars working on it. So, you have to trust that I check the Majority Text each time I prepare a lesson so I can bring you this information. I can give you a little of the story now behind your translations. In the mid-1800's a man named Tischendorff was walking through the Vatican and he saw a manuscript sitting in a burn pile. Tischendorff took the manuscript and the manuscript was dated to about 400AD. This was very early in comparison to most of the manuscripts then available (900AD). This manuscript is known as Sinaiticus. It was almost an entire Bible in Greek. After research it was found that Sinaiticus was shorter than other manuscripts and so it was concluded that the later manuscripts had material added. Some scholars support the theory because they say it is more probable that scribes would add words to the text than to take away words. However, Sinaiticus has some problems. It is shorter, it was perhaps a Gnostic text, and it was set to be burned. But the important thing to note today is that if you have a NASB it was built on Sinaiticus. See, in the late

1800's two men Westcott and Hort started the United Bible Society and they advocated the older Sinaiticus over the other manuscripts, such as the Textus Receptus which is back of KJV, NKJV. Today the reigning theory is for the older manuscripts, such as Sinaiticus. So, when I look at NA27 or Tischendorff Greek texts they are all based on Sinaiticus. The problem with this is that the Majority of our manuscripts (85%) are different from these older texts, they are longer, and they agree. The Majority Text is much closer to the Textus Receptus (KJV) than it is to the Critical Text. It is my conclusion that the Majority Text is the best text. 85% of the manuscripts agree and that seems more like the Holy Spirit's preservation than a few texts here and there that disagree, even with each other. We're going to have to say the Holy Spirit did a poor job of preserving the text if we advocate the Critical Text. In Luke 9:35 the Majority Text reads "My Beloved Son" (also KJV) not "My Chosen One" (NASB). Thus, this usage is not really under consideration.

Luke 10:42 READ. Here again, Mary knew what her other options might be. She could help Martha, but she chose to "sit at the Lord's feet and listen to His words". Again, this is the middle voice, meaning that she chose for herself to sit and listen to the words of the Lord. This did not mean that Mary didn't like Martha.

Luke 14:7 READ. In this passage the Pharisees began "picking out" certain places of honor to sit down. They picked individual places out of all known options. Again, the middle voice is used, meaning that they "picked out" these places of honor for themselves, or selfishly. Their whole being was involved in their action of picking. The unrighteous choose unrighteously. The righteous choose righteously.

Acts 1:2 READ. This is simply a present statement made about the actual historical choice which we looked at a moment ago in Luke 6:13. Exact same word, exact same form in both instances.

Acts 1:24 READ This is the choosing of the twelfth disciple to replace Judas. The 11 knew all the possible choices (v. 21-22) and they prayed that God choose out of Matthias and Joseph. There is nothing to indicate that God did not like Joseph just because he was not chosen to take Judas' office.

Acts 6:5 READ Here is the choosing of the first deacons. Notice it was done by the congregation. The congregation chose seven out of all known possibilities that qualified for the office of deacon. Their choice was not arbitrary, it was based on their knowledge of the spiritual status.

Acts 13:17 READ. In this text we find that God chose the Father's of Israel. The Father's of Israel are Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. God chose from every known inhabitant on the earth Abraham, then God chose Isaac out of Abraham's loins. He did not choose Ishmael. Then He chose Jacob and not Esau. God knew all the choices and He chose, not arbitrarily but purposefully and lovingly.

Acts 15:7 READ. Peter is referring back to the instance at Cornelius' house where the door for Holy Spirit baptism came upon the Gentiles who believed. Peter was the one whom God chose out of all the brethren present to fulfill this task. Peter is not boasting. Peter is stating the facts about what God did. Peter is not looking down on those not chosen for the task.

Acts 15:22, 25 READ. Here the elders and apostles chose men to go with Paul and Barnabas to Antioch. They had all known options before them and carefully, on the basis of knowledge chose which men to go. There is no arbitrariness here and no intimation of dislike for those not chosen.

John 6:70 READ. This reference is similar to Luke 6:13. Jesus chose the 12 yet one was a devil, Judas. Clearly Jesus chose from all His disciples, 12 to be apostles.

John 13:18 READ. Judas again. Jesus chose the 12 but one of them was betraying Him. Jesus knew when He chose Judas that Judas would betray Him. Jesus chose Judas to fulfill the prophecy. Jesus clearly had all known options before Him. His choice of Judas was not accidental or arbitrary but full of purpose. This clearly shows that election is unconditional. Judas' character was certainly not the kind of character that would make him a good apostle. But Jesus chose him anyway, knowing his character and what he would do.

John 15:16 READ. Technically this reference is to apostleship not salvation. But the idea is that the apostles did not choose to be Christ's apostles, Christ chose them to be His apostles. Middle again meaning Christ chose them for Himself with personal interest, not arbitrarily but for a purpose. Usually, friends choose one another but not in this case. This chose was an aggressive choice. Christ chose them.

John 15:19 READ. Possibly for salvation since chosen out of the world but also it may be for apostleship. It seems likely that this is for salvation and not for apostleship because Judas was chosen for apostleship yet he was not hated by the

world. He was the betrayer from the world. This is a direct reference to Jesus choosing the 11 for salvation. The result is that the world hates those who are chosen. The world hates you.

1 Cor. 1:27ff READ. God knew all the things in the world and He chose the foolish things to shame the wise men. Notice particularly in v. 29 that it is “By His doing” that you are “in Christ Jesus” not by our doing. And God certainly knows what He is doing.

Mark 13:20 READ. Here the noun is used as well as the verb. There is a group of elect and God chose them. The verb is again in the middle voice indicating strong personal interest. Notice how personal God has designed history. The tribulation will be the worst time ever on earth and God will shorten the tribulation for His elect. Is election really an unloving choice? Or is it a deeply loving choice. It’s because God lovingly chose thee elect that He shortens the horrible time of tribulation.

James 2:5 READ Did not God choose the poor of the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom? God chose out of all known options. And what He has provided for those He chose is wonderful. What a great God we have.

CONCLUSION

First, we find that in all cases a choice was made out of a multiplicity of known choices (cf. Lk. 6:13; John 15:16, 19; Acts 1:24). The choice is not arbitrary but based on knowledge. Second, just because one option was not chosen does not mean that the unchosen option is disliked (cf. Acts 6:5; 15:22, 25). Third, the fact that the middle voice is always used (with possible exception of Luke 9:35) indicates a personal interest. The middle voice is as personal as the language can express because it means literally “to choose for oneself”. The middle “calls attention to the whole subject being concerned in the action” (Mark 13:20; Luke 10:42; 14:7; John 15:16). Fourth, in most of the contexts the subject is God. Of the 21 instances, 16 of them have the subject as God or Jesus. Fifth, election is clearly a loving choice. God didn’t have to elect anyone; it is therefore by grace that He elected some. The question is not “why didn’t God elect everyone” but “why did God elect anyone”.

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