
Mission 119 Ministries

DECONSTRUCTING CALVINISM
EPISODE 12: PILLAR PROOF TEXT
EPHESIANS 1:4

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SERIES GOALS

- **Short, focused lessons**
 - **Explain Calvinism**
 - **Address claims of Calvinism**
 - **Exegetically**
 - **Historical**
 - **Philosophically**
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UNCONDITIONAL ELECTION

The doctrine of election declares that God, before the foundation of the world, chose certain individuals from among the fallen members of Adam's race to be the objects of His undeserved favor. These, and these only, He purposed to save. (David N. Steele, Curtis C. Thomas, and S. Lance Quinn, *The Five Points of Calvinism*, p. 27)

EPIISODE GOAL

- Explain what Ephesians 1:4 is all about**
 - If Ephesians 1:4 does NOT teach unconditional election, what other verse places election BEFORE creation?**
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THE PILLAR VERSE

Ephesians 1:4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.

Truth Proposition: (1) **God**, (2) **before the foundation of the world**, (3) chose certain individuals from among the fallen members of Adam's race (4) to be the objects of His undeserved favor, and (5) these only, He purposed to save.

THE PILLAR VERSE

Ephesians 1:4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.

- the “in him” is critical
 - does not say “chosen us *to be* in him”
 - does not say “chosen us to be justified [or to be Christians or to be saved]”
 - the blessing was established before the foundation of the world in Christ — the one who existed then — and is not ours until we are “in him”
 - not a decision to save specific individuals but to bless all who are placed “in him” when they respond in faith to the gospel
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THE PILLAR VERSE

Ephesians 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus... **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: **4**

According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.

MORE POSITIONAL TRUTH

Ephesians 1:6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. **7** In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace... **10** That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; *even in him*:

MORE POSITIONAL TRUTH

Ephesians 1:11 In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will...**13** In whom ye also *trusted*, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise...

MORE POSITIONAL TRUTH

Ephesians 1:18 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, **19** And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, **20** Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set *him* at his own right hand in the heavenly *places*.

MORE POSITIONAL TRUTH

Ephesians 2:5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) **6** And hath raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus: **7** That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in *his* kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

MORE POSITIONAL TRUTH

Ephesians 2:10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them. **11** Wherefore remember, that ye *being* in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; **12** That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: **13** But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

MORE POSITIONAL TRUTH

Romans 3:24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:

Romans 8:1 *There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*

MORE POSITIONAL TRUTH

Romans 16:7 Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen, and my fellowprisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me...**13** Salute Rufus chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine.

1 Corinthians 4:15 For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet *have* ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.

THE PILLAR VERSE

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- the “in him” is critical
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WHAT NOW?

➤ **If Ephesians 1:4 does NOT teach unconditional election, what other verse places election BEFORE creation?**

➤ **I would say NONE!**

BUT WHAT ABOUT?

2 Thessalonians 2:13 But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth:

Philippians 4:15 Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only.

- “from the beginning” of what?
 - “beginning” can refer to the the beginning of Paul’s ministry (compare 1 John 2:7)
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BUT WHAT ABOUT?

Acts 16:9 And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of **Macedonia**, and prayed him, saying, Come over into **Macedonia**, and help us. **10** And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into **Macedonia**, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them... **17:1** Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to **Thessalonica**, where was a synagogue of the Jews.

THE PARALLEL TO EPH. 1:4

2 Timothy 1:9 Who hath saved us, and called *us* with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, **10** But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

- the blessing is “his own purpose and grace”
 - the sphere is “in Christ Jesus,” who existed before creation
 - we get in on God’s purpose and grace when we get “in Christ Jesus”...through the gospel
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FINAL REMARKS

- **Ephesians 1:4 is not about God choosing anyone to be in Christ, or even choosing anyone for salvation**
 - **The verses teaches about one of the many blessings in Christ that does not become a reality for us until we are in Christ — until we hear the gospel and place our faith in Christ**
 - **If Ephesians 1:4 does NOT teach unconditional election, then it is NOT in the Bible anywhere**
 - **Without the U, the TULIP makes no sense.**
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