

EPHESIANS

LIVING WITH SPIRITUAL POWER: GOD CHOSE
US



SUPPLEMENTAL VERSES

1 Peter 1: 19-20

Roman 9:10-24

John 6:26-29

Rev 13:8

Romans 8:28-30

Eph 1:13

Matt 25:34

Romans 10:9-11

Luke 15:11-32

Rev 17:8

John 3:16-17

Romans 11:33-36

Rev 21:6

Acts 17:30

1 Tim 6: 15-16

1 Tim 2: 3-4

Psalms 90:4

2 Pet 3:9

2 Thes 2: 13-14

Josh 24:15

REVIEW WEEK 1

Paul is a prisoner in Rome and he is writing to believers in Ephesus almost 10 years after his ministry there.

Paul had a significant ministry there. He spent almost 3 years there (more time than he did in any other city)

Ephesus was a Port City with a lot of wealth. It was the capital of the Roman Empire in Asia Minor.

The believers there were probably wealthy in worldly terms.

In verses 3-14, Paul begins his letter by praising God. Verses 3-14 contain over 200 words in Greek and is the longest sentence in all of Scripture.

It is almost like Paul is praising God and is so excited, he can't stop his idea.

What is Paul so excited about?

PAUL BEGINS HIS LETTER BY PRAISING GOD!

Paul begins by Praising God for the riches that we have in Christ (Spiritual Blessings)

He is going to use the word “rich” more than 5 times in this letter.

He wants the believers to understand spiritual riches vs material riches.

What good are riches if you don't know that you have them?

My brother once told me about a website that you can put your name in to find out if there's any government money or inheritance that is meant for you that you never collected. Imagine this...There could be a large sum of money for you out there that you never collected. What good is it to you if you don't know about it?

Paul is Praising God here for the riches that we have in Christ right now! And He wants us to know what they are!

He is saying...these spiritual blessings are meant for you. You need to know about them so that you can understand and know God better...so that you can know his great love that surpasses knowledge...and so that you can be filled to the measure of the fullness of Christ.

SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS

Let's read **Ephesians 1- 14**

Here are the blessings that we have in Christ that Paul mentions:

1. We are chosen
2. We are adopted
3. We are accepted
4. We have redemption
5. He has forgiven us
6. He has given us wisdom and understanding
7. He has given us an inheritance
8. He has sealed us

1ST BLESSING: WE ARE CHOSEN

Verses 3 & 4:

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. For He chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight.

Wow...what does that mean that HE CHOSE US?

The Greek word used here is: “eklegomai”. It means to be picked out, or to select for oneself.

This word is used several times in Scripture.

USES OF THE GREEK WORD EKLEGOMAI IN SCRIPTURE

Luke 6:13 And when day came, He called the disciples to him & chose “eklegomai” twelve of them.

John 6: 70 Did I myself not choose “eklegomai” you, the twelve?

John 15:16 You did not choose me “eklegomai”, but I chose you.

Skittles & Football example.

The verb “eklegomai (choose) in the Greek. If it is used as a participle, noun, or adjective it is “eklektos” (Chosen). It is where we get the word “elect”

Matt 22:14 Many are called, but few are chosen “eklektos”

Col 3:12 So as those who have been chosen “eklektos”

WHAT EXACTLY IS PAUL SAYING?

I praise God...that before he even created the world...he had you in mind...and He chose you!

He selected you to be with Him...to be holy (set apart) and blameless in his sight.

Paul says that God did this in eternity past...He chose you before He laid the foundations of the earth.

THIS IS A PROFOUND MYSTERY!!!

THINGS THAT GOD DID IN ETERNITY PAST

This is not the only thing that God did in Eternity Past!

He chose Christ before the creation of the world [1 Pet 1:19 & 20](#)

In God's view, Christ was slain before the creation of the world: [Rev 13:8](#)

He prepared a kingdom for us since the creation of the world [Matt 25:34](#)

He wrote the Book of Life and included names in it since the creation of the world [Rev 17:8](#)

God was certainly busy in Eternity Past!

THE PAST ISN'T THE PAST TO GOD

Remember that God is not confined by time...only we are!

I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. **Rev 21:6**

God is Immortal in lives in inapproachable light **1 Tim 6: 15-16**

A thousand years is like one day in his sight **Psalms 90:4.**

God is outside time.

He is infinite.

This is partly why it is so challenging for us to comprehend what Paul is communicating here.

UNCONDITIONAL ELECTION

Paul says in verse 4 that, “He chose us in Him before the creation of the world”

The KJV and NASB says “He has chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world.

The Greek word here is Eklegomai or Ekelotos...Its where we get the word “elect”

And it’s also where the Theological Doctrine of election comes from:

Unconditional election says: In eternity past, God pre-destined some to receive salvation, “the elect”, the rest he left to continue in sin and receive just punishment for sin. God chose, selected people according to his own purposes apart from any conditions or qualities related to persons...It is his love & grace that motivated Him. Not anything that anyone has done, was going to do, or any choice that they would make. It is God’s Sovereign choice to pick people for himself.

UNCONDITIONAL ELECTION (CON'T)

One commentator writes: God didn't draw straws. He didn't look down the corridor of time to see who would choose Him before He decided. Rather, by His Sovereign will, He chose who would be in the Body of Christ. When God chose, He acted totally independent of any outside influence. He made His choice totally apart from human will and purely on the basis of His Sovereignty.

2 Thes 2:13-14 Because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation.

What are your thoughts on this?

It leads to many questions: Did I not choose God by believing? Do I not have freewill? What about those who God hasn't chosen? Is he unjust? How can he punish them? How can he blame them.

PAUL'S ANSWERS ELECTION QUESTIONS

Romans 9:10-24

Before they were born or had done anything good or bad...so that God's purposes in election might stand.

Is God unjust?

It does not depend on human desire or effort, but on God's mercy.

Then why does God still blame us? Who can resist God's will?

Answer: Who are you o man to talk back to God?

MANY HAVE TRIED TO RECTIFY THIS TEACHING WITH THE WORD “FOREKNEW”

Romans 8: 28-30

Romans 8:29 For those God foreknew, he also predestined to be conformed to his likeness of his Son.

This is the idea of conditional election: It states that God foreknew who were going to choose him so He chose them.

The word foreknew here means: foreloved, or intimate knowledge of.

Many would like to solve the issue of God's sovereignty vs man's responsibility by interpreting this verse to mean that God knew who was going to choose him...and so those are the ones that He chose.

This is not an accurate interpretation of this particular verse. If it were, it wouldn't make sense why Paul would ask those questions that asks in Chapter 9.

GOD CHOSE YOU BEFORE THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE EARTH!

God chose you before the foundation of the earth, in eternity past, He had you and me in mind...and he selected you...he hand picked you!!!

This is why Paul is praising God in Ephesians 1:4!

This is also why we should be praising God!

This is also a profound mystery that believers and theologians have pondered, studied, and debated...developed doctrine over for centuries.

BUT WHAT ABOUT MAN'S RESPONSIBILITY?

What about man's responsibility?

Do I not have free will?

Doesn't the Scripture teach that we have to believe?

Why preach the Gospel if God's already selected who He wants?

What about God punishing those who don't believe?

How could they believe if He didn't predestine them to believe?

All of these questions arise and lead to another truth taught in Scripture: Man's responsibility and freewill

VERSES ON MAN'S RESPONSIBILITY/FREEWILL

Isn't believing an act of my "free will"?

Doesn't Scripture teach that I need to make a choice and believe in Christ?

Romans 10:9-11 The very next chapter after Paul was discussing God's Sovereignty...he says this: " If you declare in your mouth "Jesus is Lord" and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved"

John 3:16-17 God so loved the world(not just the elect) that whosoever believes in Him will be saved. God wasn't trying to condemn the world but save it! Whoever believes in him is not condemned...whoever does not is condemned.

Anyone who believes in him

Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved!

Sure sounds like we have to exercise our will and make a choice!

VERSES ON MAN'S RESPONSIBILITY (CON'T)

Acts 17:30 but now he commands all people everywhere to repent.

1 Tim 2:3-4 Who will have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

2 Peter 3:9 Not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance

Joshua 24:15 Then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve.

John 6: 26-29 The work of God is to believe!

Eph 1:13 you were included in Christ when you believed (this is still part of the same sentence where Paul tells us we were chosen)

SCRIPTURE ALSO TEACHES MAN'S RESPONSIBILITY

Scripture after Scripture also teaches that we have a choice to make.

We need to exercise our free will and believe in God.

Ex of the Prodigal's Son: **Luke 15:11-32**

Scripture also teaches that we are responsible for the choices that we make!

Our work...our part in salvation... is to "believe in God"

Belief in God is an exercise of our free will!

Following God, and walking with Him daily is also an exercise of our freewill.

HOW DOES GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY AND MAN'S RESPONSIBILITY FIT TOGETHER?

Jl Packer uses the term Antinomy to describe this relationship.

Antinomy = An appearance of contradiction...but not a real contradiction between two conclusions which seem equally logical, reasonable, and necessary.

An antinomy exists when a pair of principles stand side by side and seemingly irreconcilable yet both undeniable.

Tony Merida says this: "Election and faith belong in the same sentence and it is a sentence only God could write. We may not understand this, but we should fully embrace it. We embrace other truths that are mysteriously woven together like the deity & humanity of Christ, the divine/human authorship of Scripture.

Someone asked Charles Spurgeon how he reconciled God's Sovereignty & Man's responsibility. He responded "I never reconcile two friends".

Someone asked another pastor about this "problem" He replied "It's not my problem. It's God's problem. And for God...it's not a problem. Just believe both truths and let God harmonize them!

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Remember...God is not constrained by time or words...or anything else.

He has told us what our part in salvation is: Our part is to believe.

His part in choosing us is just that...it's His part...and it is an amazing mystery!

How it all fits together is an even more amazing mystery.

For now, however, Paul wants us to understand that God has chosen you! He picked you. He selected you. He did this out of His love, mercy, & grace! He did this before he laid the foundations of the world!

In eternity past...God had you in mind!

Romans 11:33-36 Oh the depths and the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God!