

Ephesians 1:3-14

July 26, 2020

Repeated Words

Making a point!

He predestined/chose: 4, 5, 11,

Purpose of His will: 5, 9, 11

Praise of His glorious grace: 6, 12, 14

In/through Christ/Him: 3,4,5,6,7,9,10,11,12,13 (11 times)

Synthesis: God has a plan, centered in Christ, and we have been caught up in its glory.

Election Versus Free Will

Augustine and Pelagius: 4th-5th century

Luther/Calvin and Arminius: 16th century

John Wesley's prevenient grace: 18th century

Robert Gundry's both/and

Today's Text: an enthusiasm of praise over God's grace

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, **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 **5** he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, **6** to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed 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 upon us, in all wisdom and insight **9** making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ **10** as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. **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, **12** so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. **13** In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, **14** who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory. —Ephesians 1:3-14

The Abraham Parallel and its Implication for Us

“Election” in the worldview of a Jew

Choosing and setting apart Israel: **Deuteronomy 14:2**

The mistake of thinking the blessing was for themselves

Linking Paul's concept of election to the election of Abraham

Step by step comparison of Ephesians 1:3-14 with Genesis 12-17 (see below)

The theological meaning of election for us today

Not a matter of focusing on who is in and who is out

Rather: to be a blessing to the ends of the earth: **Genesis 12:3**

We have been blessed to bless others

The Corporate Emphasis

The object of election as a corporate entity (see for example **2:19-22**)

God's eternal purposes: a Beloved, a Bride, for the Son:

And that the Son would be the means for the Beloved to become Son-worthy

We tend to overread the individual as the object of God's election

The individual is important but the emphasis is on the corporate

Which might offer a way to reconcile sovereign election with individual freedom

God chooses to create a Beloved, we choose to enter the Beloved or not

Today's Two Practical Take-Aways

Since we find ourselves the recipients of the blessing of lavish love

One: This exalts, not us (unworthy recipients) but the glorious grace of God

Our blessing casts attention on the beauty of God

And so should we be always pointing upward in thankful praise

Isn't He amazing? should be our constant mantra

Two: our blessings are meant to be stewarded and steered outward, not hoarded

Who can I bless out of the resource of blessings that I have received?

And what if I feel empty and far from blessing?

The blessing of being **in Christ** never changes

Your life may feel like a dilapidated shack but still it sits upon a rich gold mine

To share grace with another, when you don't feel it, siphons up a reality that is there

And in the giving, the giver is refreshed yet again: **Proverbs 11:25**

Comparing the Election of Abraham and the Election Themes of Ephesians 1

The Abraham Story in Genesis 12-17	Ephesians 1:3-14
Chose Abraham and called him to go (12:1)	Chose us before foundation of the world (4)
Blessed Abraham (12:2,3)	Blessed us with every spiritual blessing (3)
Abraham is circumcised (17)	Predestined us for adoption (5)
God calls for the blood sacrifice (15:9-11)	Redemption through his blood (7)
The inheritance of a land (15:7, 18-20)	Obtained an inheritance (11)
God in the sacrifice as a flaming torch (15:17)	Sealed with the Spirit (13,14)