

God's Sovereignty in Election To Salvation

Grace Gospel Church Ministry

The Grace Gospel Church Ministry believes and teaches the **absolute sovereignty of God in Election of individuals to salvation**. We believe that our designated assignments to everlasting life were **preordained (determined) in eternity** before the creation of the world. We fully realize that this doctrinal position has been disputed and contested from the time our beloved Apostle Paul wrote his epistles until the present, and will continue to be debated up to the moment our Lord Jesus comes for His Church, the Body of Christ.

The writings herein are intended to allow the Scriptures (Word of God) **properly exegeted and rightly divided** to convey the truth in love. We pray that God will give illumination and elucidation according to His will. We only ask that God's people will read our commentary of the following verses of Ephesians chapter one as well as other supporting scriptures with an open heart and give **all the praise and credit to Him for His magnificent deeds!**

Ephesians 1:3 reads (KJV) "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ"; Now the translation from the Greek text, "blessed is (**high praise to**) the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ". The contents of this verse form the prefacing statement in the succeeding verses of chapter one, delineating God's eternal work of salvation prior to creation. Note the Greek adjective "*ehv•loy•ee•tos*" rendered "blessed", as it is derived from the compound words "*ehv*" prefixed to "*leh•go*", literally meaning to "speak well of", "to extol" or "to exalt" one worthy of blessing and praise, hence to "highly praise". Here the Apostle Paul directs the accolade to God the Father who, in performing the acts described in the succeeding verses; has highly favored those who are the benefactors of **His** deeds. Plainly stated, our blessings are the direct results of God's eternal decree.

The historical setting documents the fact that God was the prime mover and initiator of the salvation process as He dwelled alone in eternity. Thus it is He "who has blessed us"; as the aorist participle refers to that which occurred prior to the action that precipitated the praise. It is a fact that if God had not decreed the initial blessing, there would not only be any **initiative**, but neither would there be any **ability** for His elect to praise Him. It is very important for all to understand that it is impossible for a sinner who is enrobed in depravity, to come to or bless (praise) Him apart from God providing the initiative.

The contents of the next phrase "with (in) every spiritual blessing"; answers a very important question i.e., what is the **nature** of the blessing of God's elect in the dispensation of grace? The Greek adjective "*pnehv•maht•ee•kee*" (spiritual) denotes that which is invisible as the wind (John 3:8) and on the same plateau as God (John 4:24).

Here we note that the Greek noun "*ehv•loy•ee•ah*" rendered "blessing" is singular, referring to **"every individual blessings**, thus every favor, gift and benefit. All work or every good and

benevolent provision that is identified; is supplied to bring designated depraved sinners into an **eternal** living relationship with God. Hence "**Spiritual blessings**" are identified in the context of Ephesians chapter one as follows: 1). He chose us (elected some individuals) before the creation of the world to be separated unto Him. This entailed an approved standing (blameless) before Him (Verse 4). 2). He foreordained us to positions of sons (Verse 5). 3). He positioned us to be heirs of God according to His purpose and will (Verse 11). 4). He sealed us with the (Holy) Spirit until the redemption of those whom He purchased with his blood (Verse 13 &14).

Notice that these spiritual, invisible, or unseen eternal things (II Corinthians. 4:18) are in stark contrast to the emphasis on **physical blessings** in the dispensations prior and subsequent to the grace age. Thus we believe that the **elect of this age** (positioned in the body of Christ) **are distinguished from the Old Testament Saints** in that the promises are all **spiritual rather than physical**. These spiritual blessings are further delineated in Romans 8:28-30. It is noteworthy to establish the inferences of the Greek pronouns "*ee•mon*" and "*ee•mahs*", translated "we, our and us," as they are evident throughout the context. In each instant they are **1st person plural**, referencing individual persons, not groups or groupings i.e., the Body of Christ or the Church, which is designated **3rd person singular**. We believe that this refutes the idea of so called "**corporate election**" for this age.

The last phrase of Eph 1:3, translated "in the heavenlies in Christ," identifies the **locale** of the spiritual blessings. The Greek word "*eepoo•rah•nee•ees*" is derived from "*ehpee*" prefixed to "*oo•rah•nos*". This compound word etymologically denotes "**upon or in heaven**." This **heavenly location** is truly **distinguished from anything earthly located** (I Cor. 15:40). In Eph 1:20, the **heavenly position** of Christ at the right hand of God authenticates the distinct sphere of the heavenlies and the position believers occupy **in Him** (Eph. 2:6). Note every single one of these spiritual blessings is **in Christ**, in the sphere of Him, **dependant upon** who He is via His substitutionary death for His elect. Thus, this **heavenly positioning** in Christ is inseparable from our relation to Him in His Body, the Church.

Now as we move into the body of the context, it should become apparent from the historical position in eternity that the **total work of salvation** is a solo act, namely **God alone!** In this regard Ephesians 1:4 reads "according as he has chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love". And now the reading from the Greek text, "even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, to be holy and blameless before Him". This verse begins with a subordinating conjunction, the Greek word "*kaht•ah*" prefixed to "*os*" allowing the translation "**according as**". This Greek word indicates the delineation of some of the spiritual blessings mentioned in verse one. The use of the indicative mood identifies the **undisputed fact** that God chose us in Christ before the foundation (creation) of the world. We note in this verse (2) that the Greek verb "*ehz•ehl•ehz•ah•to*" rendered "chose", is formed from the compound word "*ehz*" (out) and "*lehgo*" (speak) and basically denotes "**to speak out**" hence "**to pick out**" or "**to select**". The use of the aorist tense in the grammar indicates that at a given point in the past, God **completed** the act of selecting and choosing those He **designated** to exercise faith in Jesus Christ in the sphere of time (II Tim 2:10). The use of the middle voice infers that God sovereignty selected **some (not all)** to execute His purpose involving the fulfillment of His desire. We believe that the context of the succeeding verses (5&6) substantiates this view.

Another observation from the contents is that God chose us in Christ that He might have fellowship with us (I Cor. 1:9; 1John 1:3); thus we should perpetually thank and praise Him for our **enabled companionship** with Him. Oh, what a blessing that we have the unspeakable privilege of union with our great creator and redeemer! Again the personal aspect is realized in the consideration of the

pronoun "*ee•mahs*" (1st person plural); thus confirming our election as **individual members** of the Body of Christ.

Further exegetical consideration of verse 4 casts light upon **when** God accomplished this selection of certain ones i.e., "before the foundation of the world". Note this entire adverbial phrase is grammatically classified as a genitive of possession thus denoting an era, which is exclusively owned and occupied by **God alone!** The Greek word "*kart•ahv•ol•een*" rendered "foundation" is derived from the compound words formed by "*kaht•ah*" prefixed to "*vahl•lo*" literally denoting "to cast down" hence "to lay a foundation" or to create. It is incredible for finite minds to comprehend this but God actually chose us **in Him**, i.e., in the essence of Christ **prior to time** or creation of the "*kos•mos*" (world). From this we conclusively understand that the complete work of salvation, i.e., God's choosing us **in Christ** and His provision for redemption **in Christ** all occurred **before** the creation of the world.

Next we consider the **reason** God chose us as the elect in Christ before the foundation of the world; note the Greek phrase rendered, "for our being (to be) holy and blameless before Him". Here we very carefully literally translate *eenah eemah* rendered "us to be", not "we might be", but **as the result of God's choice, "we are holy"**. In other words His sovereign act of choosing us and thus providing redemption for us in **Christ causes us to be absolutely holy and blameless before Him**. Note the thought being documented is that this is what God determined to do on behalf of His elect before the creation of the world. Thus this is a perfect once for all transaction whereby God forensically (legally) confirms us as sanctified and renewed in Him (I Cor.1:2; Col 3:10). Here we must be careful not to confuse what God has done positionally in eternity with what he has methodically arranged by design in time i.e., what the elect **is to become practically** through the power of the Holy Spirit (Eph. 4:22- 24).

This now brings us to the essence of justification or the acceptable standing which God freely gives to His elect in Christ. First we are declared to be "*ahy•ee•oos*" (holy), that which is separated unto God. This alone comprises what the definition of a saint is. It is so true that without holiness, it is impossible to see or stand in His presence; again this is accomplished only through the fact that we are **declared (counted)** to be "*ahm•o•moos*" (blameless). The formation of this Greek word is derived from "*ah*" and "*mo•mos*", which literally denotes one without blemish or stain thus, void of fault. The apostle Peter used this word in his assessment of our Lord Jesus Christ as "**A lamb without blemish and without spot**" (I Peter 1:19). Likewise the Apostle Paul uses this same word in Eph. 5:27 as he states that **Christ gave Himself to make** the church Holy and blameless.

Here we note that the concept of blamelessness might be construed by some in the realm of relativity, which is viewed relevant only in the sphere of human comparability. Here the distinction of absoluteness in this regard is significant as we identify **before whom** the elect are declared to "**be holy and blameless**" The Greek word "*kaht•ehm•o•pee•on*" rendered "before" is formed from "*kaht•ah*" and "*ehm•o•pee•on*" and conveys the idea of "in front of", "in the presence of", and "in the sight of." According to Col. 1:22, Paul states that we are holy and blameless in **God's sight on the basis of the death of Christ**. It must thoroughly be understood that **absolute holiness and blamelessness are according to the divine standard**. This is accomplished in concert with the process of election as God can only have fellowship with those **whom He has made righteous and acceptable to Him** (I Cor.1:30).

And now as we progress in the context, Ephesians 1:5 reads (KJV) "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself according to the good pleasure of his will". Now the

translation from the Greek text "In love having foreordained us unto a son position through Jesus Christ unto Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will". One point of fact is that the original Greek manuscripts do not contain any divisional distinctions; thus the context and/or content form the basis for the assignment of numbering of verses and insertion of punctuations. In this regard it is our conviction that the apportionment of verses should begin with the Greek phrase "*ehn ahg•ah•pee*" translated "in love". It posits that Paul is affirming that **love is the motivation by which God foreordained us to sonship positions**. Here it is offered as the reason for the **bestowance of such great benefit to totally depraved ones** who by nature are the children of wrath. The statement put forth is that even while in our state of depravity, God "On account of His great love with which He loved us, even while we were dead in trespasses made us alive together with Christ" (Eph. 2:4-5). This adds to the fact that salvation is by (through) Grace through the faithful work performed in the believer's behalf, thus an **inextricable** part of this free gift (Eph. 2:8). The key Greek verb in this verse is "*pro• or• ee• sahs*" translated "**foreordained**," which is derived from combining "*pro*" and "*or• ee• zo*" which respectively mean "**beforehand**" or "**prior**", and "**to set bounds, limits, and restrictions**". It conveys the idea of to limit, restrict and mark out beforehand, thus to **in prior time design and determine, or to ordain beforehand or to predestinate**. This verb is an aorist participle as it implies that this action of foreordaining occurred prior to or simultaneous with the divine selection of God's elect. The contextual thought conveyance is that **God both chose and foreordained individuals to be holy and blameless prior to creating the world**.

The focus now shifts to the **object or end** unto which God foreordained us, i.e., **to place us in positions of sonship**. Note the Greek word "*yee• o• theh• see• ahns*" rendered "Son-position," which is derived from "*yee• os*" and "*tee• thee• mee*" and literally denotes to place or put in the position of a son. The basis for this "**placement**" or "**adoption**" is the redemptive work of Christ. In Galatians Chapter four verses five through six, Paul refers to adoption of sons as those who having received the spirit, recognize God as Father. Thus it is established that **we were foreordained, predestinated, and marked out to be placed in positions of sons and in the process of time, He calls us (the elect) through the Holy Spirit**. Here we must conclude from this information that God is dead and nonexistent to the non-elect and pre-determinately void of a relation to them. From this we rejoice in the knowledge we have in being a part of **God's chosen family** (Heb. 2:10). Note this **positioning of sons** is by or through (*thee• ah*) Jesus Christ, thus **He is the agency** through which it is effectuated.

The last clause of Eph.1:5 sets forth the **basis** that God used in foreordaining us. Note, it was "according to the good pleasure of His will". Here the preposition translated according (*kah• tah*) infers the idea of "**in keeping with**", "**conforming to**" and "**in alignment with**" the good pleasure of His will. The Greek word "*ehv• tho• kee• ahn*" rendered "**good pleasure**"; is derived from *ehv* and "*thok• eh• o*" and denotes that God foreordained in conformity with what **He thought best, deemed good and pleased Him**. **The fact that God is omniscient; documents that what God deemed to be best, good and pleasing to Him was the highest possible intelligent decree**. These **perfect facts** plus God's **perfect judgment** enabled Him to sovereignly, **according to His propose** for the ages and eternity, foreordain us unto the praise and goodness of His glory.

Eph. 1:6 reads (KJV) "To the praise of the glory of his grace where in he hath made us accepted in the beloved." Now the translation from the Greek text "Unto the praise of His glorious grace which He freely gave to us in the beloved". This verse focuses on the bottom line as to what God's **purpose in foreordination** has as its final **objective**, i.e., "unto the praise of His glorious grace". Here the Greek preposition *ees* (unto) as it is used with the accusative case (direct object) conveys the thought, "**unto the end of**", "**unto the accomplishment of**" or "**unto the result of**" the praise of His glorious grace. As one views this glorious work it is apparent that God has manifested "His grace in foreordination" two-

fold. First His purpose to foreordain was motivated **by love, adorn in mercy**; an act of grace. Second the requisite for foreordaining; the necessary basis for its enactment is the outpouring of God grace in the **essence of the faithfulness of the sacrifice of Jesus** on Calvary (II Cor. 9:15; II Tim. 1:9).

Thus, foreordination is **not** the cold, hard and callous doctrine that some perceive it to be. When viewed properly it is the **channel through which God pours out His grace** upon those He chose and apart from it, **no one would be saved nor could ever come in a relation with God.**

Now having observed that foreordination is unto the end of or has as its object "**the praise of His glory**"; we focus on a very familiar term as we consider the fuller meaning of the Greek word "*ehp•eh•non*" translated "**praise**," this word is derived from the combining of "*ehp•ee*" (upon) and the root, "*eh•nos*" (praise). Here we note the significance of prefixing the preposition, as it add the idea of praise on the basis of what **God's glorious grace** has accomplished; which **intensifies** the praise. Thus on the basis of the fact that God's grace has made our foreordination possible, **it engenders supreme praise, commendation and applause; i.e., a Grace praise!**"

For one to understand the impact of a grace praise, we now focus on the meaning of the Greek phrase translated "**His glorious grace**." Note the King James as well as other versions, translate (with equal justification) the general phrase, "unto the praise of the glory of his grace" Here the basis of this rendition is the thought that our having been foreordained is unto the end of the praise of the **glory that belongs** to His grace; as indicative of the genitive case of possession. Our focus is on the Greek word "*thox•ees*", as we believe it to be most effectively rendered "glorious" in this verse (6). Here it depicts God's **honorable, splendid and exalted grace**. In verse 2, the word "*kahr•ee•tos*" (grace) depicts that which is given free, without obligation and on a non-meritorious basis. In this verse (6) we believe that it refers to God's **gracious act** of foreordaining His elect solely based upon Jesus' **gracious act** of dying on the cross for us (Rom 3:4; Acts 13:48). When we consider that apart from the manifestation of God's grace of **predestination in eternity and Calvary in time**; none would be saved (I Tim 1:14-16); thus our **highest praise, adoration and gratitude** should be **reserved** for the glorious splendid and exalted **grace of God!**

The last phrase this verse (6) translated "which he freely gave us in the beloved", may also be rendered, "which he graced to us in the beloved". We have preferred the rendering "**freely gave**" as exacted from the Greek word "*eh•khar•ee•to•sehn*", which is the verb form of the noun "*kahr•ees*" (grace). But for literal consistency we have opted to use the lesser-known verb "**graced**" as it denotes that which God "**graces**" or "**gives**" to the elect.

According to this promise the thought conveyance would be that God graced His glorious grace unto us "**in the beloved one**". Note the Greek word translated "**beloved**" (*eeg•ahp•ee•meh•no*) is a participle (verbal adjective), which is in the perfect tense (completed action in the past with continuous results) and passive voice (indicative of something one receives). The implication is that from eternities past, Jesus has and continues to be "**the beloved one**". It is striking that in this verse, we note this adjectival description **applied to Jesus Christ but in three other verses of scripture, it is applied to believers** or the elect (Col 3:12;

I Thes.1: 4; II Thes. 2:13). Oh what a **remarkable** example as we **continually praise God for His glorious grace** which He has **graced to us** through imputation of the merit of **Jesus Christ**, which in turn has made it **possible for us** to also become "**beloved ones**". From the exegesis or proper translation and interpretation of these verses as well as others, we believe that they provide undeniable **evidential documentation** that the total work of **salvation was initiated, implemented**

and culminated in eternity, i.e., a period when God was alone. Thus we believe that it is impossible to apportion any contribution of these glorious decrees and acts to anyone outside of God.