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ELECTION AND PREDESTINATION

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS
NUMBER 3
EPHESIANS 1:4

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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:"

Sooner or later in our lives we will face little problems and big problems, we will face the charge of the mosquito and the charge of the elephant. Now God knew this millions of years ago. There never has been and never will be a problem in your life for which God has not already made provision. There is no problem in your life too great for the plan of God. Every time you are a cry baby or every time you throw a tantrum and you fall apart, it is blasphemy. Just imagine saying to God, "My problems are too great for you. I have a problem that you didn't think about when you made provision for problems." Just imagine saying something like that to God!

Suffering is divided into two parts; the suffering you have in life and the suffering you have in death. Now God has provided living grace and he has also provided dying grace.

The book of Ephesians is designed to show you that divine provision has already been made for your life. If you will apply this truth, you will have inner peace, a relaxed mental attitude, and you will have great poise and stability. But if you go around crying, ringing your hands, always mixed up and are filled with pride and jealousy, you will never be able to take advantage of all the great provision God has made for your every need.

In this study we go back into eternity past, long before man was created, long before Satan was created, and long before the universe existed. Back there God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit existed together and they anticipated everything that would ever transpire in all human history. In the anticipation of these things, God authorized a plan that had you in mind.

God the Son agreed to execute phase 1, namely, Salvation.

God the Holy Spirit agreed to execute phase 2, namely, the living of the Christian life.

Each member of the Trinity had a part in this plan. The plan of God is greater than any one individual or all individuals put together. Now once you are in the plan, there is no way to get out of the plan. You can't lose your salvation even if you think you can. Now let's go back to eternity past when God was thinking about you. He knew every problem you would ever have and he knew the solution to that problem. Now don't try to make some deal with God by doing certain things, and don't think you can buy the favor of God with your ten percent. People who try to get favors from God this way just never will understand the grace of God and never will catch on to what it is all about. Now God designed you to come into his plan and develop perfectly. Now the fact that you have had some great emotional experience, some ecstatic experience doesn't mean a thing. But that which does mean something is that long before you existed or any other people existed, God existed eternally and his plan is to bless you. It is a plan of grace and it all depends on who he is and what he is. Just think, he takes us losers and makes winners out of us. God can do it and he is doing it. God can't be a loser, for he is a winner. Remember, God can and will provide something better for you.

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:"

You remember that we have stated that beginning in Ephesians 1:3 and running through verse 14 we have the longest sentence in all literature. There are two verbs in this sentence. One of those verbs is in verse 4 and the other one is in verse 5. The first verb is "Chosen" and the second one is "Predestinate." In eternity past God held an eternal life conference. When in that conference he designed the plan of salvation he had in mind your every need and at that time made provision for it. Both of these verbs are followed by the plural pronoun "us" and refers to every believer of the whole human race. Now we were all born losers. We read, "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." We also read, "There is not a just man upon the earth that doeth good and sinneth not." So we were all losers when we started out, but the moment we believed in Christ we became winners. In Ephesians 2:1 we will read that we were all born spiritually dead. So once we are saved we are always saved. Once we are in the plan, we will always be in the plan. We go up and down in our allegiance and in our devotion, but we can't get out of the plan, once we are in it.

Now this verse pulls the curtain back and lets us look into eternity past. The Greek language is a very amazing language and by the use of a little Greek word the curtain is pulled back so we can look into eternity past. The aorist tense is a point of time in the past, an occurrence in eternity, when there was no time. The aorist tense then takes an event and brings it over into time and dates it. So you take a point here, and then another point, and still another point and pull them all together, and this is the kind of action expressed by the aorist tense. Believe means the point of time when you believed, and that is expressed by the aorist tense. But then that point of time was picked up and perpetuated forever and that is translated "once for all." "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved once for all." So the aorist tense is designed to teach us something about eternity past. So the aorist tense takes us back to a point in eternity past and says at that point we were "chosen" then it says we were "Predestinated."

Now remember all three members of the Trinity have the same ten essence qualities--Sovereignty, righteousness, justice, love, eternal life, omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence, immutability and veracity. But in eternity past God the Father did the choosing. So verse 4 begins with the words "according as" and the words are "kata os" and means look at this analogy, look as I draw back the curtain for you to look into eternity past. Thus the scene is introduced. "He hath chosen us" and the word chosen is "ek lego." "Lego" is to speak and "ek" means out from, so this word came to mean to communicate out from your own viewpoint, to make a decision, to choose. Now man's soul was so designed that in his soul there is volition, so man was given the capacity to choose.

Now when a man at the point of God-consciousness goes on positive volition, God assumes the responsibility of giving him the gospel message. Now in eternity past God knew what each volition would do, and he knew whether the volition would go negative or positive.

Your action never shocks God for he knew all along what you were going to do even before you did it. God knew the very moment when you would be saved. He didn't force you or persuade you, he just knew what your volition would do. Knowing the moment of your salvation, he also knew all the needs you would have during your lifetime and he provided for all those needs. So to get the thing started out right God chose Christ in eternity past to be our Saviour. Then the moment we believe in Christ we are related back to that moment in eternity past when Christ was chosen. God designed the plan back there, and when we believe we simply reach back and relate to that moment Christ was chosen. Christ's election took place in eternity past and when we believe we reach back and relate ourselves with that event.

It goes like this--He elected you but you didn't exist yet. He elected you, but you can elect someone who was not there. So he had to elect someone who was there, and Christ was there. Christ was there and he represented us, and God chose him. God the Father elected God the Son. The verb is in the aorist tense, a point of time in eternity past. The word for elect is "ek lego" and it means to speak out from, to choose, to elect. God cast one ballot for Christ and he was chosen. It is middle voice and this means it is reflexive so it means God himself elected Christ the Son.

Now at that time there was no human race. Then when Adam was created and the human race started, in order for Christ "The chosen one" to relate to the human race, he himself had to become a human. So when Christ was elected, the humanity of Christ was in the mind of God. It took a human Christ to deal with a human man, thus the Virgin Birth. In their deity God the Father and God the Son are co-equal. So co-equality doesn't elect co-equality. In order for Christ to be elected he had to become a man. So in the election Christ's human life was in focus. He was chosen to be born in Bethlehem, to grow up in Nazareth, to live on this earth 33 years, to be rejected and crucified, to be buried and to be resurrected, then to ascend and then to sit down at the throne of God. It was all a part of the chosen plan. God the Father elected God the Son, and God provided something perfect. God is perfect and his plan is perfect. When we are saved we are entered into union with Christ, and at that moment we are elected. The moment we believe in Christ we share his election. When we share his election then we are elected. The indicative mood here means the reality of our election.

Now we move on to the second verb and that verb is "predestination." Predestination simply means that God knew about it all before it happened. The word is "pre designed." The moment one accepts Christ the plan of his life begins right then.

ISAIAH 30:21 "And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left."

PSALM 32:8 "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye."

Now God doesn't shove his plan on us. He waits for us to get with it. He waits on our positive volition. The word for predestination is "pro orizo" and it means to design before. Now this pre design does not interfere with free will. God knew the decision that would be made but he didn't put pressure on one in order for him to make that decision. There is no conflict in God's plan and your action. God's plan and your life is predestination. Every decision you make, he has already provided for. So predestination does not begin in verse five, but in verse four.

Then it says, "He hath chosen us in him."

Now which came first, "chosen" or "predestination?"

"Chosen" is "ek lego" and is an aorist, middle, indicative.

"Predestination is "pro orizo" and is an aorist, active, participle. The action of a participle always precedes the action of the main verb in a Greek sentence, so predestination always comes before election. Let me ask you a question?

Do you think God would choose us without having it all planned out in advance? Do you think he would invite you to the party without having everything planned before you arrived? Certainly not. You predestinate something first, then you move into it. He predestined it then he elected us. Now when he chose you, he knew you were going to have some problems. So he first provided for the answer to all those problems before he offered salvation. Remember, God is not a sorry planner. He made a perfect plan before he ever extended us the invitation to enter it.

Now what is this thing called predestination? It is simply this--God had the good sense to plan the party before he ever invited anyone to come. That's exactly what predestination is. Now don't get tripped up by extreme Calvinism which says that some believers are predestinated to Heaven and some are predestinated to hell. It isn't true. Predestination is a fancy word and you can make something ridiculous out of it. Predestination doesn't make an oriental fatalist out of anyone. You are a part of the plan and a part of the provision, if by your free will you choose to be. So God planned the party and then he invited you to come. And remember, no disaster is too great for he has already planned to care for all the needed details.

Please notice that after the word "chosen" and the word "predestinated" we have the word "us." That means every believer.

"Then it says, "in him" and that is positional truth and means once we believe we are in Christ and we can never get out.

And when did this happen? Before the foundation of the world.

"That" here introduces a purpose clause.

"That we should be holy" and to be holy doesn't mean to go around with a long sad face avoiding a good time. Do you feel holy? Well, what do you mean by holy? I don't necessarily feel holy. Holy is so easily misunderstood. It means to be set apart unto God. The overall design is so simple. When we accept Christ as Saviour we have POSITIONAL SANCTIFICATION. Sanctification is being holy. It means we enter into union with Christ. And this union is to make us like Christ. God's purpose is to take us and make us exactly like Christ. So our position is in Christ, we are in the process of becoming like him.

Then we begin the production of the Christ life and all human good doesn't count, only the divine good and that divine good adds up to EXPERIENTIAL SANCTIFICATION. Then when we die we exchange this old broken body for a resurrection body exactly like Christ's and that is ULTIMATE SANCTIFICATION.

So no matter what--every believer is a winner and God sees to that. So this is God's marvellous design, to make all of us holy.

"Without blame" means someone else steps in and takes the blame for all of our sins, and that someone is Jesus Christ. We deserved to get the blame, but he took the blame for us.

"Before him in love" means that right now, even with all of our faults, we stand before him without blame and in love.

So this is the doctrine of election.