

# DEEP IN SCRIPTURE

*Verses & Notes June 6, 2007*

*Ephesians 1:3-4 (Part 4)*

- 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.

## INTRODUCTION:

- The words of Scripture teach us that in Christ we received enumerable blessings and graces because of God's infinite mercy and love, or as St. Paul says in today's text, we have been blessed "in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places." This is what we are told, but is this what you have experienced in your life as a Christian? ... This is part of what we will be discussing today on **Deep in Scripture**.
- A. Welcome ...
- B. Continuing are where we left off last week with Eph 1:3;
  - St. Paul from prison writing a homily to newly baptized Gentile believers...
  - He is building upon what he presumes they already know...
- C. Ephesians 1:3-14 is one long Christian "berakah" or blessing; essentially an Invocation.
  - The focus of this entire section is praise to God, not on ourselves:
  - The basic theme/summary of this Invocation is:
    - **"Blessed be HE who has blessed us to be a blessing."**
    - All the rest of Eph 1:3-14 elaborates on this,
- D. Today we pick up with verse 4:  
*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,  
**even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world,  
that we should be holy and blameless before him.***
  - In this verse, St. Paul draws our praise to God by pointing out our infinite, immeasurable debt to His love and mercy:
    - His love is so great for you and me that He has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places—in other words, from now until eternity;
    - Even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world—in other words, He has loved you & me from the very beginning;
    - Why? That we should be holy and blameless before him—now and forever.
- E. Today discussing the controversial topic of our election in Christ:
  - St. Paul's conviction on this subject is demonstrated by the number & variety of words he uses in this passage to describe God's sovereign purpose and plan:
    - Vs 4: "chose"
    - Vs 5: "predestined...good pleasure...will"
    - Vs. 9 "his will...his purpose"
    - Vs 10: "plan"
    - Vs 11: "his purpose...the council of his will"
    - Vs 12: "destined and appointed"
  - This subject has led to great division amongst Christians...
  - The truth of this doctrine has led to at least 4 major misconceptions:
    - **"Eternal security"**: If God chose me from all eternity, long before I did anything to deserve it, regardless of my actions, then there is nothing I can do to lose it.

- **"Universalism"**: Since God desires all to be saved and salvation is freely given from all eternity, then none are left out; all are saved!
- **"Double predestination"**: Rejecting universalism, some must therefore NOT be chosen, but predestined to Hell!
- **"mere foreknowledge"**: rejecting all of the above and emphasizing man's free will, God's predestination and election is nothing more than God's foreknowledge of what we will one day freely chose.
- All of these come out of Reformation Christian traditions that believe in *sola Scriptura*; but none are based *solely* on Scripture but more upon their own traditions, experiences, and opinions.... (i.e., to protect either God's sovereignty or man's free will).
- Today we'll discuss this passage and the doctrine of election by critiquing a Protestant preacher's sermon notes on this passage, and that Protestant preacher was me.

## BREAK

Seventeen years ago, long before I ever considered becoming a Catholic, when I was the senior pastor of a Presbyterian church, I preached through Ephesians.

- I was an evangelically minded Calvinistic Presbyterian who loved Jesus & held to *sola Scriptura*;
- What I believed & preached was very close to what I now believe as a Catholic, but yet significantly different.
- We'll follow my old outline (printed on the website)...

F. **What is ELECTION?** "The work of God's GRACE whereby he CHOOSES individuals or groups for a PURPOSE in accordance with His WILL."

## G. ELECTION IS ...

- **God's ETERNAL choice: (Eph 1:4a, 5a)**

Rom 8:28-30

*"We know that in everything God works for good with those who love him, who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the first-born among many brethren. And those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified."*

Jeremiah 1:5

*"The word of the Lord came to me, saying, before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart."*

Ps 139:13-16

*"For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb...All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be."*

- **God's LOVING choice (1:5a)**

Romans 5:8

*"But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."*

Eph 2:4,5

*"But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions."*

- **God's GENEROUS choice (1:5)**

Ephesians 2:11-13

*"Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called the uncircumcision by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands -- remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near in the blood of Christ."*

Acts 13:48

*"When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and honored the word of the Lord; and all who were appointed for eternal life believed."*

- **God's SOVEREIGN choice (1:5b, 11)**

Rom 9:14-21

*"What shall we say then? Is there injustice on God's part? By no means! For he says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion." So it depends not upon man's will or exertion, but upon God's mercy. For the scripture says to Pharaoh, "I have raised you up for the very purpose of showing my power in you, so that my name may be proclaimed in all the earth." So then he has mercy upon whomever he wills, and he hardens the heart of whomever he wills. You will say to me then, "Why does he still find fault? For who can resist his will?" But who are you, a man, to answer back to*

God? Will what is molded say to its molder, "Why have you made me thus?" Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for beauty and another for menial use?"

John 15:16

"You did not choose me, but I chose you to go and bear fruit."

- **God's GRACIOUS choice (1:6)**

Ephesians 2:1-10 [8-9]

"For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God -- not because of works, lest any man should boast."

2 Tim 1:8,9

"But join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God, who has saved us and called us to a holy life -- not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace."

- **God's PERMANENT choice (1:4a, 5a, 9-14)**

Phil 1:6

"being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."

Rom 8:31-39

"What then shall we say to this? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, will he not also give us all things with him? Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies; who is to condemn? Is it Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised from the dead, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us? Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, "For thy sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered." No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

## H. The Truth of God's Election is NOT intended for argument, speculation, or division, but for our humble...

- **ACCEPTANCE,**
- **ASSURANCE,**
- **GRATITUDE,**
- **SELF-AWARENESS, AND**

- **Our CHOICE to ACCEPT JESUS BY FAITH;**

John 3:16

"For God so love the world that he gave his only Son that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."

Rom 10:9,10

"...because, if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For man believes with his heart and so is justified, and he confesses with his lips and so is saved."

- **Our COMMISSION to EVANGELIZE AND MAKE DISCIPLES;**

Ephesians 2:1-10 [8-10]

"For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God -- not because of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them."

Matthew 28:19

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you."

1 Tim 2:3,4

"This is good, and it is acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth."

- **Our CALLING to BE HOLY AND BLAMELESS IN HIS SIGHT (1:4)**

Matthew 5:48

"You, therefore, must be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect."

1 Peter 1:15,16

"But as he who called you is holy, be holy yourselves in all your conduct; since it is written, "you shall be holy, for I am holy."

Rom 12:1,2

"I appeal to you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may prove what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect."

- **Our CONCLUSION to PRAISE AND WORSHIP GOD!! (Ephesians!)**