

**Eph 1:4 (ESV)** even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love

### 1. We come to an interesting and controversial verse

- A. Here the Apostle talks about how all the blessings in Christ come into our life
- B. Notice Paul doesn't start where many of us would start
  - 1). We might start with us – they came into my life when I believed
    - a). That is certainly a part of it - but Paul doesn't start there
  - 2). We might say – they began with the work of Christ – incarnation and crucifixion
    - a). That is a part of it - but Paul doesn't start there
  - 3). Paul goes all the way back into eternity past – before time began
    - a). He says the blessings you enjoy began with the Father choosing you

**Thought:** This shouldn't shock us – been seeing all along the Bible always starts with God

**Transition:** This brings us to a controversial subject in the Christian body - Election

### 2. Let me say before starting - We accept we have to live with some tension here

- A. Because we see truths that seem to contradict one another in the Scriptures
  - 1). We have God's Sovereignty – he chooses who will be saved – Ephesians 1:4
  - 2). At same time we seem to have man's responsibility – any man can choose God
    - a). There seems to be a universal invitation - "*Whoever will* may come" - Rev 22:17
- B. I struggled with this a lot – was helped by Spurgeon – great proponent of God's sovereignty in salvation
  - 1). When election was before him in the Scriptures he taught that with all his heart
  - 2). When man's responsibility was before him he taught that with all his heart
    - a). You hear him pleading with the unbeliever in his sermons "Come and you will be saved!"
  - 3). When asked how he reconciled these two seemingly opposite thoughts he said
 

**CHS:** I am quite certain that God has an elect people, for he tells me so in his word. And I am equally certain that everyone who comes to Christ shall be saved, for that also is his own declaration in the Scriptures. When people ask me how I reconcile these two truths, I usually say that there is no need to reconcile them, for they have never yet quarreled with one another.
- C. I live with the tension and preach what is in front of me
  - 1). I believe I am saved because I was one of the elect
    - a). That I was chosen by grace not because of anything I have done
  - 2). I also believe I can go to anybody on the street and say
 

"If you will go to Christ by faith you will be saved."
  - 3). If you think I'm going to erase the tension today – finally clear up 2000 years of arguing – No!

**Transition:** I am going to show you God's side of salvation - That is what Paul teaches in Ephesians 1

- A. That does not eliminate man's responsibility to believe – there is that tension again!

## I. ELECTION

**Eph 1:4 (ESV)** even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world...

### Election Is a Biblical Reality Spoken Throughout the Scriptures

#### 1. This truth goes all the way back into the OT

- A. God chose Abraham out of all living in the Ur of the Chaldea's to be the Father of Israel
  - 1). This was a sovereign choice of God by grace – Abraham did nothing to merit it
- B. He chose Israel out of all the nations - not because of anything they had done

**Deu 7:6-8 (NIV)** For you are a people holy to the LORD your God. The LORD your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be his people, his treasured possession. (7) The

LORD did not set his affection on you and choose you because you were more numerous than other peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples. (8) *But it was because the LORD loved you* and kept the oath he swore to your forefathers...

1). Election is all about God putting his love upon a nation or an individual

C. We move into the NT and we find election everywhere – at least 41 verses speak of election

1). In many places the believer is referred to as the elect – as the chosen

**Point:** The truth of divine election cannot be denied – because it's in the Bible

A. We may disagree on how it comes about but we cannot deny election is scriptural

**Transition:** Before we move on – let me say again – I don't mind you disagreeing with me on this

A. I just don't want you to be lazy and do it because you emotionally feel this way or that

1). Or this man or that man (Including me) said this or that

2). Be good Bereans – study to show yourself approved – be convinced in your own mind

B. IOW don't believe this simply because some church or man does

AND let's not approach this in an argumentative spirit

1). Approach this reverently – humbly – “God show me. I want to know what your Bible says”

**Transition:** Let's define election – in Ephesians 1:4 we see we are the chosen of God

A. That those who will enjoy all these incredible blessings were chosen by God before the earth was formed

B. To define election let's move over to 1 Peter 1 to help define how that came about

## II. ELECTION DEFINED

**TURN: 1 Pe 1:1–2 (ESV)** Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, *To those who are elect* (There is our context) exiles of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, <sup>(2)</sup> according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood: May grace and peace be multiplied to you.

### The Origin of Our Salvation (How our salvation came about)

**1 Pe 1:2 (ESV)** (To those who are elect V. 1) *according to the foreknowledge* of God the Father...

#### 1. So election is according to foreknowledge

A. How would you answer if God asked “How is it you came to believe when others didn't?”

1). Peter would say “You foreknew me” - but what does that mean?

#### 2. The two schools of thought on election (Only 2 possibilities)

A. **First:** We are chosen by God simply as a result of his good pleasure

**Eph 1:5 (ESV)** ...according to the purpose of his will,

1). This is not because of who we were – it is in spite of who we were

a). In spite of the fact that we were enemies (Rom 5) and hostile towards him (Rom 8)

b). In spite of the fact we hated God and wanted nothing to do with him (Rom 3:10-12)

B. **Second:** The only other alternative is that before the foundation of the world

Because of God's perfect foreknowledge – he saw who would believe in him

1). And God chose them because they first chose him

**Point:** These are the only two possibilities

A. Man chose God because God chose him – *Man responding to God*

Or God chose man because man chose him – *God responding to man*

**Transition:** I believe in the former – I chose God because God chose me – I want to show you why

A. I want to take my time here – we will move past election next week – want you to see this before we do

#### 3. The argument for divine sovereignty in election

- A. **Jesus insisted on God's sovereignty in salvation** in John 15  
**John 15:16** "You did not choose me, but I chose you..." (that's pretty clear)
- B. Paul removed man's merit in Eph 2  
**Eph 2:8-9 (ESV)** For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, <sup>(9)</sup> not a result of works, so that no one may boast.
- 1). **Jesus insisted on divine sovereignty in salvation**  
**Paul rejected man's merit in salvation**
  - 2). Grace must do that – it is UNMERITED favor – a gift given to those who DON'T deserve it
    - a). God has designed salvation in a way that leaves NO ROOM for human boasting

**Thought:** So like I've said many times - whatever your salvation theology is

    - 1). It must include God choosing you – that's from Ephesians 1:4  
**Eph 1:4 (ESV)** even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world...
    - 2). AND that choice must be predicated on grace = no merit whatsoever on your part  
**Eph 2:8-9 (ESV)** **For by grace you have been saved** through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, <sup>(9)</sup> not a result of works, so that no one may boast.
      - a). As long as you have those as foundational truths in your salvation theology  
 You'll be safe – you'll be lining up with Scripture
    - 3). I don't see God choosing us because we chose him first in scripture  
**Jn 1:12-13 (ESV)** But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, <sup>(13)</sup> who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh **nor of the will of man**, but of God.
      - a). We must handle verses like that honestly

**Transition:** Here is the one I think is very powerful

      - 1). We get a hint of what "**foreknowledge**" can't be by the way Peter uses it in two places
        - a). If we can define this word - that would tell us what election is based upon
- C. Word "Foreknowledge" (Prog-nosis) in Greek - 1 Peter 1:2  
**1 Pe 1:2 (ESV)** (Elected v. 1) according to the **foreknowledge** of God the Father...
- 1). Prognosis only used one other place in NT in Acts 2:23 - again by Peter
    - 1). If we see how it's used the other time - will give us a clue what it means here

**TURN keep 1 Peter marked: Ac 2:23 (ESV)** this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and **foreknowledge** (Prog-nosis) of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.

    - 1). Could this be saying - God wanted a Savior to go to the cross  
 Looked down corridor of time - saw Jesus chose to do that - so He chose Him?
      - a). Of course not – this was all according to the plan decided beforehand by the Godhead
    - 2). That's what you have in 1 Peter 1:20  
**1 Pe 1:20 (ESV)** He (Jesus) was **foreknown** (verb related to prog-nosis - "Pro-gnosko") before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you
      - a). Christ was foreordained before the foundation of the world to be the redeemer
        - 1a). The implication was that Christ was designated to be the Savior before creation  
**2 Ti 1:9 (ESV)** who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, **which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began**,
    - 3). Word foreknowledge is never used in terms of simply knowing about future events or actions
      - a). It describes predetermined events or relationships **that God has decreed to bring about**
        - 1a). In this case adoption – God chose who he was going to adopt beforehand  
 He foreknew that! He decreed that to come about

**Point:** Certainly God knows everything and could have based election on fact he knew who would choose him

- A. That is the Arminian view and I held it for years – I just don't think that is what the Bible teaches
  - 1). I don't think the definition of foreknowledge will support that
  - 2). I don't think the idea of grace – unmerited favor – will support that
- B. I also don't think the teaching of Ephesians 1 will support that

**TURN: Eph 1:5 (ESV)** he predestined us for *adoption* to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, *according to the purpose of his will,*

- 1). We are adopted solely because of the will of God – not on the basis of what we have done

**Eph 1:11 (ESV)** 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,

- 1). Scripture consistently teaches predestination or election is based on the sovereignty will of God

**Point:** In all these instances “Foreknowledge” has to mean to “pre-determine”

- A. God pre-determined in the past - Who the Savior was - and what He would do
  - 1). I believe it's saying the same thing about who He chooses to be with Him in heaven
- B. This is a sovereign merciful – gracious act of God
  - 1). I say merciful because - If God only chose one - it would be mercy
  - 2). The just thing to do would be to send everybody to hell – the wages of sin is death
  - 3). Election is grace given to those who don't deserve it
    - a). It is God lifted rebels out of the pit – while they are still rebels – ex. Paul the Apostle
    - b). There is no room for any human boasting

**Transition:** This isn't meant to bother you – it is meant to comfort you and fill your heart with praise

## The Comfort of Election

### 1. Look how Peter taught election

**1 Pe 1:1–2 (ESV)** Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who are elect exiles of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, <sup>(2)</sup> according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood: May grace and peace be multiplied to you.

- A. Peter is writing too – suffering – persecuted believers who are anxious and afraid
  - 1). They are watching the fury of Rome rising up against them
- B. He writes to inspire them to live for God in the face of persecution
  - 1). He writes to give them comfort – and a joy that is so great it is inexpressible
    - a). Notice He doesn't teach like so many today – humanism
      - One list of what you have to do added to the list you were given last week
        - 1a). Until your pile of “To do's” is so high your buried under its weight
  - 2). He comforts them with what God has done – starts out with doctrine – theology - election

**Point:** He says to these individuals who are being separated out and persecuted

“I want you to know that you are the ELECT. I want you to glory in that.”

- A. This world may be rejecting you but God hasn't – He loves you and chose you
  - 1). All they can do is kill you – but that doesn't remove you from his grip – He will keep you
- B. The truths of election are meant to floor us with the greatness of what God has done for us
  - 1). Why Paul interrupts his teaching with two great prayers
    - He knows this is so incredible that he stops – “God help them understand this”

**Eph 1:17-20 (NIV)** I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. (18) I pray also that the eyes of *your heart may be enlightened* in order that you may know *the hope* to which he

has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, (19) and his *incomparably great power* for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength, (20) which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms,

**Eph 3:16-19 (NIV)** I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, (17) so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, (18) may have power, together with all the saints, *to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, (19) and to know this love that surpasses knowledge--that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.*

- a). God's love in our salvation – in election and adoption – in giving us an inheritance in Christ  
In promising we will be with him – eternal security
- b). It is so great it's beyond knowledge
  - 1a). Unless the Spirit opens your understanding – you won't get it
- b). God's power in raising dead men and women is so miraculous
  - 1a). Unless we are given understanding we can never understand it

**Point:** Ephesians 1 is God on display – grace, mercy, love, and power off the charts

- A. When we see this it changes us – it causes worship – adoration - gratitude

## This truth changed my life

### 1. For years I thought I had attained my salvation by my choosing God

- A. Problem if you attain your salvation you must maintain your salvation
  - 1). Therefore I was trying hard to hold on to him tightly enough not to lose my salvation
    - a). I lived with anxiety – always wondering if my grip was tight enough
- B. But I discovered – if he chose me – he was responsible to keep me – Again Adoption
  - 1). I started resting in his love – his grip on my life
  - 2). Instead of having a Father who might always kick me out of the family  
I discovered I had a Father who said you are mine – I will get you into glory
  - 3). When I began to rest in his grip – that allowed me to fall in love with him in a deeper way

**1 John 4:19 (NKJV)** We love Him because He first loved us.

- C. That is what the truth of election is meant to do - light our hearts up with love
  - 1). Why Paul had to stop and pray we would see the love in it

**Question:** Didn't this cause you to sin more – serve less – chosen and kept “I'm good”

- A. Of course not! Just the opposite – I want to serve the one who has loved me like this
  - 1). I want to honor the one who has been so kind – who has made me feel so secure
- B. Ladies which husband would you fall deeply in love with
  - 1). The one who was constantly threatened to kick you out if you didn't perform well enough  
Or the one who said – I chose you to be my wife and I will never leave you or forsake you
    - a). You are secure in my love – I will protect you and provide for you  
You need not worry one bit – you can rest because my love for you is never ending

## III. HOW ELECTION BECOMES A REALITY IN OUR LIFE

### 1. The Spirit applies choice God made in the past in a practical way in the present

- A. He illuminates the truth so powerfully the unbeliever does respond

**Transition:** It is what is called *“irresistible grace”* – let's talk about that

## 2. Irresistible grace

- A. Gotten a bad rap - God forcing us into the kingdom against our will kicking and screaming  
“No I don’t want to go - I don’t want to be a Christian” TOO BAD!
- B. God draws us – then illuminates the reality of my sin and the need of forgiveness
  - 1). It becomes so clear that it is irresistible – I do response

**Transition:** Let’s see how He does it - turn to 2 Cor 4:4

**Plight of the unbeliever: 2 Co 4:4 (ESV)** In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

- A. They don’t understand the Gospel - blinded – the truth that can save them makes no sense at all
- B. Blinded to the truth - What is worse - if they could see it - they wouldn’t want too
  - 1). It sounds ridiculous to them – to that sinful nature they are dominated by  
**1 Cor 1:18 (NIV)** For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing...
  - 2). The unbeliever dominated by the sinful nature - doesn’t seek God  
**Ro 3:10–11 (ESV)** as it is written: “None is righteous, no, not one; <sup>(11)</sup> no one understands; *no one seeks for God.*
    - a). There is no one in Irvine this morning – got up – on their own decided to seek God
    - b). They are naturally wired to hate God and his ways  
**Rom 8:7 (NIV)** *the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so.*
- C. The solution - the Spirit goes to work – illuminating the truth – bringing understanding  
**2 Co 4:6 (ESV)** For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.
  - 1). He convicts the sinner of their sin and convinces the sinner of the only remedy
    - a). This one who never interested us before becomes intensely interesting
    - b). He changes our thinking - touches our affections – turns our heart
      - 1a). We become willing to give up what we always loved = sin  
And we WILLINGLY - FREELY embrace that which we never wanted = Him
  - 2). The Spirit has made the truth so convincing it is irresistible and we respond

**Point:** That will happen to those who are the elect – those who are chosen

- A. That’s what Paul says in 1 Thessalonians  
**1 Th 1:4-5 (NIV)** For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has *chosen* you, (5) because our gospel came to you not simply with words, but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction.
  - 1). He says I KNOW you were chosen by God – you were one of those in Ephesians 1:4. Why?
  - 2). Because the Gospel hit you in a different way than it hit others
    - a). Many heard us preach and for some the message remained foolish
    - b). But for others – the chosen (context) – it came with soul converting power  
The Holy Spirit used that truth to produce a deep conviction – and desire to be rescued
    - b). And because of that you responded
      - 1a). It was so irresistible – so convincing it moved you to respond to Christ in faith

**Internal Summary:** What do we have so far

- A. God has chosen those who would be his – Eph. 1:4
- B. God has drawn them – causing the truth to be so irresistible they do respond – 2 Cor 4:4-6. 1 Thess 1:4-5

**Transition:** How do I know this has happened to me? How can I tell I’ve really been saved?

## IV. THE RESULT OF ELECTION

**Eph 1:4 (ESV)** even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, *that we should be holy and blameless before him.*

### 1. The life changes radically – from loving sin to living for him

A. God chose you – saved you from your sin – to live like Christ

**Ro 8:29 (ESV)** For those whom he foreknew he also predestined *to be conformed to the image of his Son...*

B. That is the proof of election – that God has done that saving work

**John Blanchard:** No man can prove that he is a child of God without showing the family likeness.

**R. C. Lucas:** The only certain proof of my election is that today I am following the Lord.

1). I am not perfect but the whole direction of my life has changed

a). I am walking towards God but I still trip at times

2). When I trip I am convicted – proof – and turned – proof – I start walking towards him again

## CONCLUSION

### 1. The controversial truth of election

A. I love it – it is God glorifying and man humbling – God gets all the glory I get none

B. It is a doctrine filled with grace and mercy – God rescuing those who should go to hell

1). It is God intercepting those who love their sin and are marching into hell

**Spurgeon:** Election is God's answer to a man who will always say no

### 2. Does that take away man's responsibility to believe? No!

A. You say I don't like this thought – maybe I'm not chosen – then believe and you'll be saved

1). I don't want to believe – well then maybe you're not chosen

I don't want that! Then believe and you'll be saved – “whosoever will”

B. If you don't know Christ this morning – don't worry about election

1). Worry about the cost of rejection – hell! Go to him and you'll be saved

**Jn 6:37 (ESV)** All that the Father gives me will come to me, and *whoever comes to me I will never cast out.*