

Chosen in Him Ephesians 1:3-4

(NKJV) 3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, 4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love,

After Paul's short introduction he begins on a list of 14 things that God has either done for us or given us in Christ Jesus.

Paul is not debating or answering ugly charges hurled against him; he is not using all of his intellectual powers to make reasoned statements. Rather, he prays—and he shares his prayer. He breaks out into joyful praise, then moves into deep intercession. *The Preacher's Commentary Series (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Inc, 1982), 145.*

All of it is to the praise of His glory, a phrase found three times in this passage. All the credit goes to God and to Jesus and to the Holy Spirit. That is why we will cast our crowns at His feet.

Man could never by pulling on his own boot straps get himself out of the mess he has gotten himself into. Only God. Or as Jonah said, "Salvation is of the Lord." Jonah 2:9.

So the first thing that we see in this list of the reasons we are to praise is glory is that God has chosen us before the world began that we should be holy without blame before Him.

I. God's choice.

A. The meaning of the word.

1. v-4 The verb "chose" (*exelaxato*) is the usual one employed in LXX in connection with God's choice of Israel. It implies the taking of a smaller number out of a larger. *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*
2. 1) to pick out, choose, to pick or choose out for one's self. *Strong's*

B. The idea is used in the Old Testament of God choosing Abraham from among all the people of the world.

1. Even from among his own brothers.

C. It is seen in God's choice of Jacob rather than Esau.

1. And thus the choice of the nation that would come from Jacob.
2. Deuteronomy 7:6-8 (NKJV) 6 "For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth. 7 The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples; 8 but because the LORD loves you, and because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers,

3. first, the word is used of God choosing out Israel from amongst all nations to be the channel through which He will bring salvation to all those in these other nations who will receive it. *Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament*
- D. It is seen in the choice of Judah for the kingly tribe and Levi for the priestly tribe and Joseph for the tribe that received the double blessing.
 - E. It is seen in God choosing people for special service such as David to be King and the prophets to represent God.
- II. Here God's choice is in reference to salvation and all that come with that.
- A. As we find in other places.
 1. 2 Thessalonians 2:13 (NKJV) 13 But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth,
 2. 1 Corinthians 1: 26 For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. 27 But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; 28 and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, 29 that no flesh should glory in His presence. 30 But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God — and righteousness and sanctification and redemption — 31 that, as it is written, "He who glories, let him glory in the LORD."
 3. 2 Timothy 1:9 (NKJV) 9 who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began,
 - B. Even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world; literally, he chose us out, or selected us for himself (middle voice). *Pulpit Commentary*
- III. His choice was made before the world was created.
- A. This is Paul's way of saying in eternity.
 - B. Since God is God nothing is to difficult for Him.
 1. Acts 15:18 18 "Known to God from eternity are all His works.
 2. Isa 46:9 Remember the former things of old, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me, 10 Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things that are not yet done, Saying,

‘My counsel shall stand, And I will do all My pleasure,’

IV. Notice who it is in, Him, Jesus Christ.

A. All that we have we have in Jesus Christ.

1. The phrase "in Christ" or its equivalent occurs twelve times in these verses.
Life Application Bible Commentary.

B. All of this in Christ and Him alone.

1. Jesus has no assistant.

- a. The Greek verb eulogeo might possibly hint that they are brought to us through the Word (logos) of God. There is a repetition of three different derivations: *eulogetos*, *eulogesas*, and *eulogia*. *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*; See also John Eadie

- b. Paul uses this formula in Christ Jesus about 164 times in His writings.

- c. There is one Savior and that is Christ Jesus.

- (1) Mt 1:21 "And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins."

- d. There is one Mediator and that is Christ Jesus.

- (1) 1Ti 2:5 For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus,

- e. There is one Redeemer and that is Christ Jesus.

- f. There is one High Priest and that is Christ Jesus.

- g. There is one sacrifice for sin and that is Christ Jesus.

- (1) Behold the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world.

2. He alone provides all these blessing by the atonement He has provided for us.

- a. Acts 4:12 (NKJV) 12 Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

V. That we should be:

A. Holy

1. God's purpose is to conform us to the image of Jesus Christ.

2. God's children will display God's character.
- B. Without blame
1. God did not choose some because he foresaw their holiness, but in order that they might become "holy and without blame." *Pulpit Commentary*
 2. The terms do not denote justification, but a condition of sanctification which implies justification already bestowed, but goes beyond it; our justification is a step towards our complete final sanctification. *Pulpit Commentary*
 3. Notice the connection here with Eph 5:25 just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, 26 that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, 27 that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.
- C. Before Him
1. Under His eye.
 2. Before His face.
 3. In His presence
 4. For His pleasure.
 5. To the praise of the glory of His grace. V-6

The doctrine of election teaches that we are saved only because of God's grace and mercy; as believers we are not saved by our own merit. It focuses on God's purpose or will (1:5, 9, 11), not on ours. God does not save us because we deserve it but because he graciously and freely gives salvation. We did not influence God's decision to save us; he saved us according to his plan. Thus, we may not take credit for our salvation or take pride in our wise choice. *Life Application Bible Commentary.*

We have these blessings because of God's choosing us (1:4), Christ's dying for us (1:7), and the Holy Spirit's sealing us (1:13). God gives spiritual blessings to believers because of the saving work of all three persons in the Trinity. *Life Application Bible Commentary.*

Salvation is from our side a choice, from the divine side it is a seizing upon, an apprehending, a conquest by the Most High God. Our "accepting" and "willing" are reactions rather than actions. The right of determination must always remain with God. A. W. Tozer

We are here face to face with a profound mystery. Before even the world was founded, mankind presented themselves to God as lost; the work of redemption was planned and its details arranged from all eternity. Before such a mystery it becomes us to put the shoes from off our feet, and bow reverently before him whose "judgments are unsearchable and his ways past finding out." *Pulpit Commentary*

While the present author would not be at all dogmatic in his interpretation, and not even sure that he is right, he leans to the opinion that the words "in love" are to be construed with "predestinated". The verb "chosen" (selected out) is too remote from the words "in love," and the word "predestinated," so near, that it would seem to decide the case for, "in love having predestinated." *Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament*

The verb itself means "to mark out the boundary or limits" of any place or thing. When used of persons, it means "to put limitations upon that person," thus, "to determine his destiny." *Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament*

In the N.T., it is always used of God as determining from eternity, sometimes with the further definition 'before the age' (I Cor. 2:7)—decreeing to do something (Acts 4:28); foreordaining things or persons (I Cor. 2:7, Rom. 8:29); or as here, appointing one beforehand to something. *Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament*

Ps 65:4 Blessed is the man You choose, And cause to approach You, That he may dwell in Your courts. We shall be satisfied with the goodness of Your house, Of Your holy temple.