

Grace Bible Church
Tree of Life
A Weekly Review
Week Ending 06/13/2010

We have completed our exegesis of Eph 1:3 and here is the final product.

Translation: “Worthy of praise and glorification the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ [this is not appreciated until the believer reaches SSE], the [only] one having provided us [true] benefits by every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ.”

Don't forget that verses 3-14 are one long sentence in the original language. Within this sentence there will be several main verbs and participles, which are verbal nouns.

Our first main verb is given in verse 4.

Eph 1:4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love

“He chose us” – aorist middle indicative of eklego = exelexato, which means, “elected for Himself.” The middle voice emphasizes that He elected you not for your benefit, although it is greatly beneficial to you, but ultimately He elected you for Himself.

Isa 43:25 "I, even I, am the one who wipes out your transgressions for My own sake; And I will not remember your sins.

In verse three we had an aorist participle... **Eph 1:3 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,**

“has blessed” — *ho eulogesas* – literally, “the one [God the Father] having blessed.” This is the aorist active participle from *eulogeo*. We also saw that it is a rule of Greek syntax that the action of the aorist participle always precedes the action of the main verb.

The aorist participle (having blessed) precedes the main verb (elected for Himself) which occurred before the foundation of the world. Therefore, the first thing that God ever did was the means of glorifying Himself – blessing you. The second thing that God ever did was the means of making that blessing a reality for the believer – electing you. Both of these occurred, as stated in verse 4, before the foundation of the world. What God did in planning before the foundation of the world falls under the category of doctrine called the divine decrees.

To get a more thorough understanding of this blessing and election we have to study this doctrine.

Doctrine of the Divine Decrees:

Point 1: Introduction

What is most disagreeable to God is a believer thinking that God is not in control of everything. I will bring this out in this doctrine. You are responsible for the free will decisions you make while under the permissive will of God. So if you reject Christ as Savior it is a repercussion that is on you alone. God didn't make you negative, but He allowed you to be negative. You reject doctrine and the plan of God as a believer and there is a repercussion of divine discipline and loss of rewards in time and eternity, all on you as well. But while all good

and bad decisions are on us in our free will, when God allowed that free will, it reveals that God could have stopped any of it at any time and therefore He is in ultimate authority. But God who is infinite has control over every variable. This is impossible for us to understand.

Theologically the term decree refers to what God has planned before creation and its continuance. The fact that God is perfect in wisdom makes it a logical conclusion that He had some plan or something in mind for the creation of angel and mankind before they were created. That plan is perfect since God is perfect. But we don't have to conclude this through logic since the Bible is clear that: God has predestined, foreordained, and made to come to pass all His good pleasure. Although mankind mocks a perfect God, which results in imperfections, we know that God has graciously dealt with His fallen imperfect creatures in a way that allows Him to continue to prevail and complete His perfect plan.

Mankind has come up with a lot of funny ideas about a great many things. They range from the not so stupid to the incredibly brainless. And ideas about what God has done in the planning stage in eternity past are no different.

In this long sentence in Eph 1:3-14 everything is about the things that God has done for us in grace. In other words, the long sentence is all about the good, and doesn't deal with the bad and the ugly, so neither will we at this point. God is Sovereign over all His creation. To think otherwise is to discredit Him. Is God limited to having to choose the best plan for Him that doesn't include the best plan for you? Does God have to choose between Himself and His creation? Cannot an infinite all knowing God accomplish both? He can and He has.

Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, 'My purpose will be established, And I will accomplish all My good pleasure'; (Isa 46:10)

So God gets all that He wants and I'm the guinea pig.

“And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require from you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and love Him, and to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, **13 and to keep the LORD's commandments and His statutes which I am commanding you today for your good?” (Deu 10:12-14)**

But the saints of the Highest One will receive the kingdom and possess the kingdom forever, for all ages to come.' (Dan 7:18)

And the ultimate good on your behalf:

and when He had given thanks, He broke it, and said, "This is My body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me." \

So God is able to accomplish the greatest good for Himself as well as His creatures. To accuse Him of anything less is to discredit Him.(1Co 11:24)

It is most essential to clear and sober thinking on the part of devout believers that all suggestions which tend to imply that God is not following a plan which is worthy of Him should be rejected. To suggest that He is but partially in authority, or that He has failed and is seeking to salvage something out of the wreckage, is outside of His character and so should be rejected. To suggest that He is conforming to existing things over which He has no control, shall be rejected.

In spite of the immediate problems which the presence of sin and suffering create, it shall be accredited to God that, in the end, He shall have accomplished that which alone is consistent with infinite wisdom and goodness.

And the LORD is the one who goes ahead of you; He will be with you. He will not fail you or forsake you. Do not fear, or be dismayed. (Deu 31:8)

In perfect wisdom God will accomplish His wrath.

“But they rebelled against Me and were not willing to listen to Me; they did not cast away the detestable things of their eyes, nor did they forsake the idols of Egypt. Then I resolved to pour out My wrath on them, to accomplish My anger against them in the midst of the land of Egypt.” (Eze 20:8)

When the issue of the Sovereignty of God and the free will of man is reduced to its lowest dimensions, there remain but two general overtures: Either (1) that God is sovereign and all that ever has existed or will exist is within His plan, or (2) that He is not sovereign and there is more or less in the universe which exists in defiance of His holy character and over which He has no authority.

Many so called theologians seem to want to release some pressure off of God concerning the sin problem and so they come up with some modification of #2. They deviate from the literal interpretation of the scriptures and I'm sure God doesn't need their help.

The doctrine of divine decree of itself introduces nothing mysterious or profound. It declares that God both designed and willed before He acted, and that all His actions are in harmony with His perfect character and attributes. There can be no praise for God, if even slightly, you think that God has in some way failed. Either He is Sovereign or He is not, there can be no middle ground.

The worst sinner who ever lived submitted himself to doctrine and the power of the Spirit and it made him the greatest believer ever.

God has not failed, He has not been defeated, and He has not made light of sin. No doubt should be entertained as to the just and authoritative way in which God achieves His ends. Once the attributes of God have been investigated through faithful reception of the word of God we must conclude that God is holy in character, and that He is infinite in righteousness, omniscience and omnipotence. Once the essence of God is established in our faith:

The difficulties imposed on our finite minds must be met with that very faith in the essence and character of an infinite God. Mankind has always attempted to adjust God's character to fit his finite mind. At its best, man's understanding is fallible and this limitation is ever being demonstrated by the shallow and hasty way in which men deal with the workings of an infinite God. To suspect the wisdom of men is not a serious matter. One might in fact conclude that all men are liars without much argument from anyone who has known the moral corruption of man's heart. This is not so far from the truth, as our Lord depicted in:

But Jesus, on His part, was not entrusting Himself to them, for He knew all men, and because He did not need anyone to bear witness concerning man for He Himself knew what was in man. (Joh 2:24-25)

There is a reason why I pause here in our study of Ephesians to press home this study of the divine decree. It is really a study in the character and nature of God. You may say, "I know His character and I know His essence." And if you do and are convinced I'm glad for you. But times of doubt will occur in every believer's life no matter what stage of spiritual growth they are in and we cannot press on in the spiritual life with doubts. This book is about the spiritual life of the Church-age believer and so Paul through the inspiration of God the Holy Spirit begins the revelation with the worthiness and holiness of God and our Lord Jesus Christ in eternity past.

No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten God, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained *Him*. (Joh 1:18)

Most so called normal people in the world would think that was the most foolish thing they'd ever heard. To change my understanding through a bumper sticker and a street sign is absolutely absurd. But what they don't know is that God sends us His messages in the smallest ways. A lot of the time we miss them because we're so busy with the details of life, but sometimes God shouts to us with that still small voice.

But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised. (1Co 2:4)

And after the earthquake a fire, *but the LORD was not in the fire; and after the fire a sound of a gentle blowing*. (1Ki 19:12)

The foolish are looking for God in the storm, the earthquake or the fire, some huge event, but God is in a gentle voice to those who have faith in Him. It is a most serious thing to suspect the wisdom, holiness, or authority of God. Moses has recorded in Deu 29:29 that there are secret things which belong to God, and that there are revealed things which belong to men.

The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our sons forever, that we may observe all the words of this law. (Deu 28:29)

Certainly this verse might be understood as referring to the mystery doctrine that was not revealed to Moses, but notice the adverb "forever." There are certain things that are in the infinite mind of God that the finite mind of man must consider secret, but can be appreciated through faith.

The truths and the doctrines of this epistle have been targeted towards the believer with momentum in the spiritual life, no matter what stage of spiritual growth. Coming up are such doctrines as election and predestination. Coming up are the love of God, the grace of God, the will of God both directive and permissive. These doctrines will be trampled upon by carnal believers who have no goal but self and what self can consume. Do not devour these words that are coming to you. Do not chew them in apathy or indifference. If you do, you not only discredit their beauty, but you end up hurting yourself.

The doctrines you are about to taste have been kept away from most believers and reserved for your soul to enjoy fully. Don't let them hit your ears without appreciation for what they really are.

It is incumbent on the student of the word of God, to whom God's deeper revelation is addressed, to penetrate into that which may be known about how man came to be lost and what could have brought it to pass in the midst of a universe wherein a holy God rules supreme.

Definition:

The decree of God is His eternal (always existed), holy (perfect integrity), wise (the application of omniscience to creation), and sovereign purpose, comprehending simultaneously all things that ever were or will be in their causes, conditions (status), successions (interaction with others that leads to certain decisions), relations, and determining their certain futuration.

1. The term *decree of God* appears first in the singular, since God has but one all-inclusive plan. He sees all things at a glance.

For convenience, the separate features of this plan may be called the decrees of God; but there should be no implication in this that the infinite understanding of God advances by steps or in a train.

And there is no possibility that the one plan, the decree, will be altered by omissions or additions. Nor is it true that God can have a particular purpose and have something go on in His universe that is unrelated. God sustains a distinct purpose concerning each aspect of His one intention.

The Cross brings everything into focus again and makes faith possible to bridge that gap between the infinite and the finite. With God there is one immutable decree embracing in itself every detail, even the falling of a sparrow. It is the divine cognition from all eternity.

2. God formed His decree in eternity, though its execution is in time. So God did all of this in a moment in eternity past but it follows a system of steps that you and I are doing now. God's decree is final but it is successive. We all live what God has already seen and the intrusion of His will in our lives was designed. God has done many things, past, and still yet future, that you will totally miss, but He does so out of love, faithfulness and grace. Under submission to His authority, the doctrine and the HS to lead you to make the decisions you have to make from a position of strength. Operate as the Lord would. He submitted to the Father and yet He did much. This is your call and this is the call of this epistle.

For He was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you who through Him are believers in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God. (1Pe 1:20-21)

Christ was foreknown just like you and I were. And He accomplished something amazing. Just because God knew it doesn't mean you don't have to do it. Just like it was for the humanity of Christ, it is a privilege for you and I under our own free will to accomplish what God has designed in eternity past.

God is Holy: Holy means perfect integrity. Holy is righteousness and justice in the same breath. Nothing God does is wrong or unfair. Whenever we shout out, "this is wrong or unfair," we have lost that faith in a Holy God. We've all done it. And have all been guilty here. You say He's real, but you just don't trust Him for everything. That's the same as saying that He doesn't exist. For if He's not to be trusted for everything then He doesn't exist. Go ahead, don't trust Him. When you don't you are alone. You are just an evolved creature who has no future besides what you can do now with no eternal repercussions. You're still looking for a purpose. So you become an environmentalist or a politician or a soccer mom or dad that's gonna save your own corner of the world. What you don't realize in your own little corner of the world is that you're blind to the big picture. You weren't designed to save the planet, you were designed to glorify God.

Having thus emphasized the *eternal* character of the divine decree, it may yet be added that the decree of God is wise, being the product of infinite wisdom. There is a worthy reason for all that God has ever done or will do. Even His permission of evil will, like the wrath of man, be made to praise Him (Psa 76:10).

O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! (Rom. 11:33).