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C0425 -- June 30, 2004 -- Ephesians 1:12 -- The Glory of God

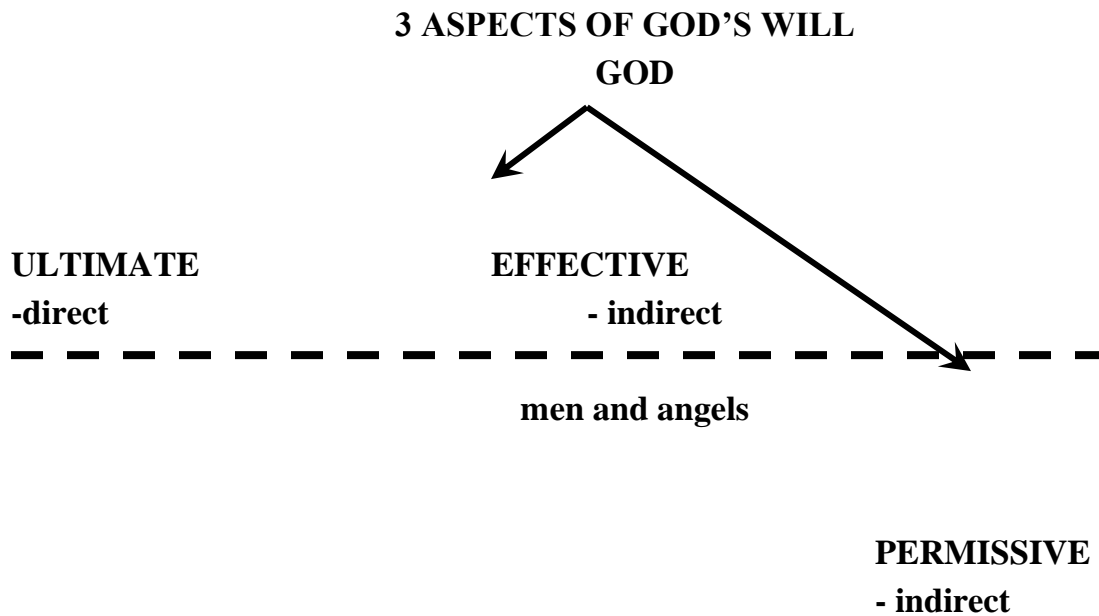
Ok, last week we looked at Eph. 1:11, one of the strongest verses in the Bible on “The Sovereignty of God”. When we looked at the doctrine, we said several things about God’s will. First of all, God’s will is free. This means that nothing in God’s created universe conditions God’s will. He is absolutely free to do whatever He wants that is compatible with His character. Second, when considering the free will of God, we find that there is the secret will of God and the revealed will of God (Deut. 29:29). Since humans are unable to penetrate God’s secret will we can only speak about God’s revealed will. There are 3 basic aspects to the revealed will of God. First, God’s *ultimate will*, second, God’s *effective will*, and third, God’s *permissive will*.

When we talk about God’s ultimate will we are talking about things that God directly brings to pass without the help of any responsible agents such as angels or men. All things in God’s ultimate will are absolutely certain to take place because God by His omnipotence makes them take place.

Next, we looked at God’s effective will. When we talk about God’s effective will we are talking about things that God indirectly brings to pass. By indirectly we mean that God brings them to pass through responsible agents such as men or angels, etc. As with God’s ultimate will, all things in God’s effective will are absolutely certain to take place because He effects them.

Finally, we looked at God’s permissive will. When we talk about God’s permissive will we are talking about things that God allows or permits to take place. God allows things to take place that are contrary to His moral character and are therefore not God’s will for our lives. All sin and the effects of sin are under God’s permissive will. God’s permissive will includes all the commands of God in Scripture. We are able to resist God’s commands in this life. Every time we break one of His commands, although He knew we would break it, we are out of the will of God. The permissive will of God therefore, offers a command which men may follow or break. However, for those who love God, for those who have

been called according to His purpose even evil things work out for the good (Rom. 8:28). Here's the chart we looked at briefly last week showing the 3 Aspects of God's Will plus where the Scripture places responsibility.



***everything above the line God is responsible for. Everything below the line men and/or angels are responsible for.**

Let's look at some biblical events and doctrines and see what aspect of God's will these might fit into. Some of these do not fit into a hard category, there is some overlap, so some issues may fit more than one category. Who is responsible for the following and what aspect of God's will to they fit under?

Suffering	P
Judgment	U E
Convicting ministry of Holy Spirit	U
Creation	U
Redemption	U E?
The Fall of Man	P
Physical Laws of Universe	U
Determinate Counsel of God	U
Discipline	UE
Prayer	U (Rom 8) E (John 15) P (unansw)
Reconciliation	U E?
Temptation	P (James 1)

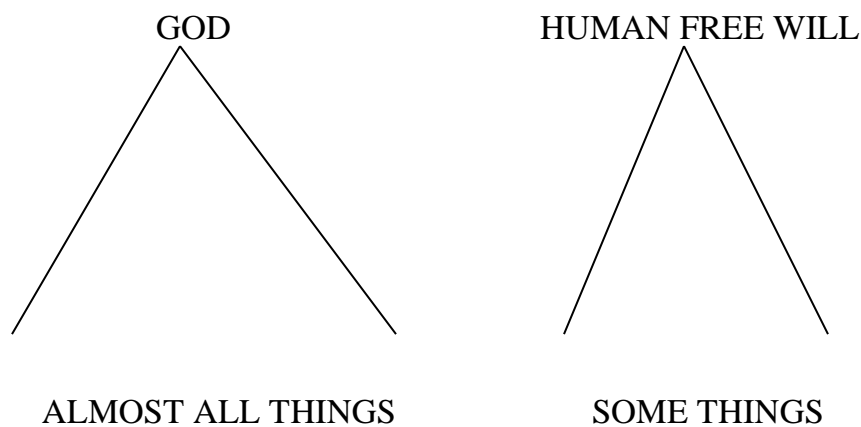
Witnessing	E P
Plan of God	U
Inspiration of Scripture	E
Evil	P
Drawing	U E? (the Word as an instrument)
Faith	P Human
Salvation	U E (blood of Christ)
Grace	U E?
Propitiation	U E?

HUMAN WILL: INDEPENDENT OR COMPATIBLE?

Remember, several weeks ago we looked at the relationship between divine sovereignty and human freedom. We talked about two types of freedom that men have discussed. At the time I called this indeterminism and compatibilism. I'm trying to simplify my terminology so I'm going to use *independence* instead. So, there are two types of freedom: *independent* and *compatible*. *Independence* at base says that a person has free will. Remember that we taught that God has free will and we said that what it means for God to have free will is that nothing in God's created universe conditions God's will. He is absolutely free to do whatever He wants that is compatible with His character. Does man then have "free will" in that sense? If we do have free will in that sense then I could always choose contrary to the choice I made. Given this type of freedom I see no way for God to be in control of the universe and to make anything certain that involves creature choices. I cannot find a single verse that says that man has this kind of freedom. This idea is simply assumed to be true; it is assumed to be axiomatic to human nature. But the Bible never says this. A second type of freedom was what we call *compatibilism*. By this is meant that there is still genuine freedom if God works by *non-constraining* causes. That is, God never forces you to act contrary to your will, desires or wishes. The example we used was getting a person to leave the room. There were three ways this could be accomplished: 1) carrying them, the most extreme form of constraint; 2) putting a gun to their head, another form of constraint; or 3) convincing or persuading them by a perfectly certain argument (e.g., if you leave the room, you'll find that a brand-new car is waiting for you). This is *a* solution but it may not be *the* solution. However, I do think that this protects both divine sovereignty over the entire universe and genuine human responsibility or freedom and it certainly does not distort at all any verses where human choices and divine sovereignty are in the same passage (e.g., Acts 2:23; 4:27-28). In every case, humans were doing what they wanted to do (volition) but at the same time they were doing what God determined to occur. They were not being forced to do something against their will, desires, or wishes. Turn to Prov.

16:9, 33. What about Acts 4:27-28? I want you to contemplate how it could be possible to reconcile these passages on a view of freedom that says that men could always have chosen contrary to the choice they made. This is just one example of several passages that show the interaction between divine sovereignty and human freedom. I don't think it is possible, on an *independent* view of freedom, to make sense of that passage; because if the human will was *independent*, then Herod, Pontius Pilate, the Gentiles, and Israel could have always chosen not to nail Jesus to the cross. Therefore, the cross would not be a certain event. The key event to all of history could have been prevented. How can we reconcile the certainty of this event with independent human freedom? No one for 6000 years has ever given an answer to this question. If indeterminist freedom is really what we have then that would mean that God was not in control of the universe because human free will would be outside and independent of God. Ultimately, that means that God's plan can be thwarted and the Bible says that's not possible (Prov. 16:4; Isa. 46:8-13; Rom. 11:36; Heb. 6:17). So, at least *compatibilism* makes sense of this passage in a satisfactory way.

Is anything independent of God?



What about Romans 11:36? 1 Cor. 8:6? 11:12? Col. 1:16? Heb. 2:10?

HUMAN FREE WILL ERASES RESPONSIBILITY

Most people who say that man must have this free will believe this because they think that it preserves genuine responsibility to God. However, notice that free will actually means man is not responsible to God at all! In fact, free will destroys responsibility completely. If the human will is independent of God, then it is not responsible to Him or anyone else. The human will has become ultimate. Only if the human will is under God's authority can it ever be held responsible by Him. This should be easy to understand because if you have

children then you have experienced this again and again. Which children in the world are responsible to you? It's your child that you gave birth to that is responsible to you, not someone else's child. Someone else's child is independent of you and therefore is not responsible to you. If God made all things then all things are actually dependent on Him, including the human will, nothing is independent of Him. Affirming independent freedom is a denial of creation. Therefore, given any form of *independent freedom* I can see no way for God to be in control of the world as outlined in **Eph. 1:11**. Nor is there any way to preserve genuine human responsibility before God. Eph. 1:11 indicates that everything that occurs does so because of God's decision. Nothing external to God such as foreseen human actions or merits of creatures determines God's choices. God deliberated, chose, and accomplishes all things on the basis of His purpose. How God accomplishes all things and yet man is still responsible was explained under God's Ultimate, Effective, and Permissive Will?

FREE WILL vs. VOLITION

It seems to me that the way the Bible speaks of Divine Sovereignty seems to nullify the idea of free will as it is typically taught. But, be careful here, there is a difference between free will and volition. (OVERHEAD) Free will means that man's will is independent of all influences that lead to certain choices. Volition means that a man always does what he wants to do within the confines of his limitations and is held responsible for what he does. These two are worlds apart. Biblically there is no such thing as a choice that is independent from all influences. Everything is ultimately under God's control. Just how does the Bible describe the human will or volition? There are four aspects of the human will:

- 1) The human will is *created* by God so that God has absolute authority over the human will.
- 2) The human will is *finite*, that is, it has a limited number of choices in a given situation.
- 3) The human will is *mutable*; its desires and wishes can be changed by natural or supernatural influences.
- 4) The human will is *fallen* so that now the human will, apart from any divine working, is subject to its nature which is evil.

The fact that the human will is *created*, *finite*, *mutable*, and *fallen* indicate that there is no such thing as Free Will in the sense of independent freedom. Nothing is independent of God. At creation the will of man was given a large degree of freedom. However, that was lost by his abuse of that freedom and now the human will is enslaved to his nature which

is sinful (unless God...). Historically the term 'free will' was defined...as that aspect of man which was free to sin, but not free to righteousness. Why then should men boast of free will if they are the servants of sin? Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is freedom (2 Cor. 3:17), but not where the Spirit of the Lord is absent. Therefore, "that the will is indeed free, but not freed—free of righteousness, but enslaved to sin."¹ The will of man is certainly not free toward righteousness, but only free toward sin. If this is the way free will is being used and understood then I am all for it. However, if Free Will, is some kind of independent principle then it is clearly contradictory to Divine Sovereignty and human responsibility because it would mean that there are things in this universe that are outside of God's control. If there are things that are out of God's control, that are totally independent of Him, then the future is not certain at all; your salvation, your eternal security is not really secure at all because of possible circumstances outside of God's control. This is exactly what the Arminian argues when he says we can lose our salvation! Eph. 1:11 and many other passages deny this. Nothing happens outside of the plan of God; nothing is outside of God's control. If something occurred that was outside of God's plan then God would cease to be God.

VOLITION/RESPONSIBILITY COMPATIBLE WITH DIVINE SOVEREIGNTY

While free will is contradictory to divine sovereignty...human responsibility is not. Just because God has made history certain to come to pass, declaring the end from the beginning, does not contradict angelic or human responsibility for our actions. For example, you go to boot camp, and when you get there you are told that you will be a soldier in 6 weeks, that you will be in shape! While the ends are determined the means of reaching those ends involve human responsibility/volition. You have to get up early, you have to train day and night, you have to eat and drink...but you will be a soldier, and you will be in shape. Planning and determining an outcome is not contradictory to human responsibility/volition. As parents we often plan the destiny of our children; we say they are going to go to X college or Y college and they go, but this does not remove human responsibility/volition to be involved in that plan taking place. There are still registration forms to fill out, classes to sign up for, books to buy, etc. Now, God has pre-planned your destiny. Just like these other cases, just because the end is determined does not mean that we aren't responsible as a part of the means to that end. We still have to believe, etc. What is contradictory to planning and bringing a plan to pass is free will because then that plan cannot be certain at all to come to pass. God runs His universe in a way that the outcome is certain and yet human responsibility is a part of the means to God's end (cf. Isa. 46:9-11). Such is the way God runs the universe. A terrible number of verses simply don't make sense under any other view of human freedom (e.g., Ps. 115:3; Prov. 16:9, 33; ***Dan. 4:34-**

35 (Read entire context); Acts 2:23; 4:27-28; Phil. 2:12-13; Heb. 13:21). But this and all these other passages do make sense on a correct understanding of human responsibility/volition or what is sometimes called *compatible* freedom.ⁱⁱ

Now, let's take a few minutes for some Q & A and then we'll look briefly at verse 12 and the Glory of God.

(4) Goal: Praise of His Glory (1:12)

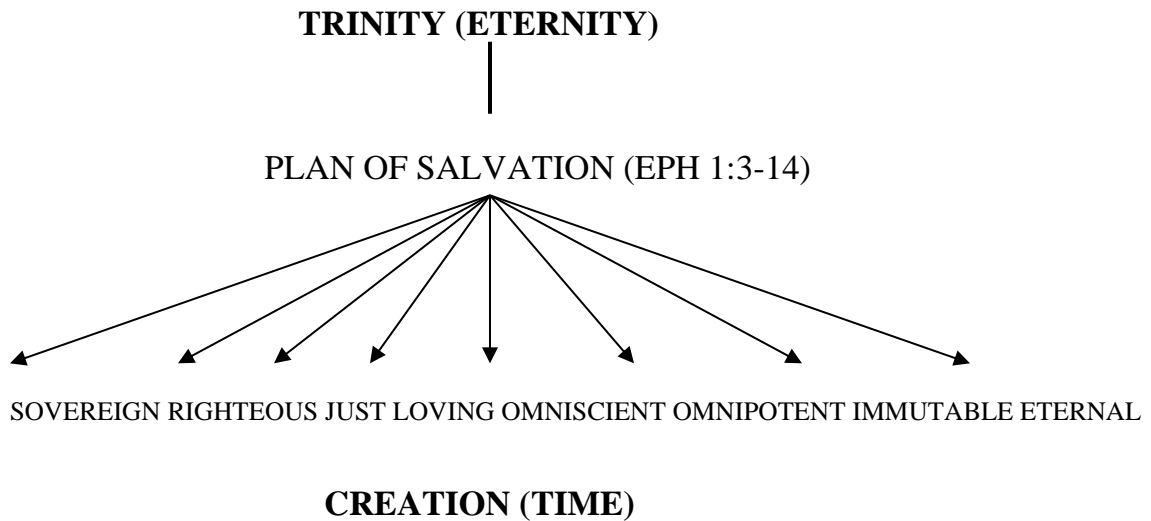
Greek Text: 1:12 *ei=nai h`ma/j eivj e;painon do,xhj auvtou/ tou.j prohpikotas evn tw/| Cristw/|* $\dot{\text{A}}$

Translation: 1:12 in order that we, the ones who already hoped in Christ, might be to the praise of his glory;"

v. 12 is the close of the second section of this longest of Greek sentences. The first section dealt with the Father's role in the plan of redemption (vv. 4-6). The second section deals with the Son's role in the plan of redemption (vv. 7-12), namely, redemption in the Son, the revealing of the mystery of God's will to unite all things under Christ, and that we were made a heritage according to the predestined purpose of God.

eivj to. ei=nai h`ma/j eivj e;painon do,xhj auvtou/* "in order that we might be to the praise of his glory."** *eis to* with the infinitive refers to either purpose or result. In this case it refers to the *purpose*, that is, the *goal*, not of our predestination (participle) but of our being made a heritage (finite verb). ***We were made a heritage... in order that we might be to the praise of his glory. This is just like in v. 6 where ***to the praise of his glory*** was dealt with in detail. There we said, ***to the praise of his glory*** referred to the *goal* of the Father's predestination to adoption and election. Ultimately, the Father's actions in predestination and election have as their *goal* the praise of God. The ultimate purpose of predestination and election is not primarily for our benefit, but for God's glory. You have to understand this principle or you will never be able to accept or understand predestination and election. Predestination and election are for God and His glory. When you start to slip off of this idea you start asking questions like, "why did God elect some and not all?" or you start trying to rationalize the doctrine by trying to find a reason God elected some and not all based on human morality or foreseen decisions rather than some reason(s) in God alone. So, **the key idea to keep in mind is that the plan of salvation is primarily a revelatory device.** It is for God. God is a God of light and it is in His nature to reveal Himself. Salvation is designed in order to reveal God's character to His creation. By way of analogy, we might think of this like a prism. We have light coming into a prism and the prism does

what? It separates out the different wavelengths. It separates the light into different colors. Now, by way of analogy God is light and the plan of salvation is designed to act like the prism. This prism of salvation separates out the different aspects of God's character so we can see who and what God is.



Now is this beginning to make sense to you? Are you beginning to see why Eph, 1:4-14 is here? Eph. 1:4-14 is like a prism through which all the infinite and intertwined attributes of God are being separated out so we can get an idea of who God is.

**What this means is that the more you know about the plan of salvation the more you understand and know God. On the other hand, the less you know about the plan of salvation the less you understand and know God. Even worse is the scenario where we have a false understanding of the plan of salvation. When we have an incorrect view of God's plan of salvation, we have an idea of God but we don't really know God (1 John 2:3-6). In addition, to the extent that you do not know God you do not know man because man is made in the image of God. To know a mere image, you must first know the reality. Ever think of it that way? God is the ultimate reality; we are the images.

THE GLORY OF GOD

Now, to a question of difficulty...What is the glory of God? Paul says that all this is *to the praise of His glory*. But what is the glory of God? The glory of God is the sum of all of God's attributes or perfections. It's the essence of God. OK, if the glory of God is the sum of all of God's perfections then how can God who already has infinite glory gain more glory?

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO GLORIFY GOD?

Can this mean that when we glorify God, we are piling more glory onto God, kind of like layer of layer is being added to God? This can't be true because we already know that God is not growing, nothing is added to God's perfections. He is wholly complete in and of Himself. His perfections are already infinite. How much can you add to infinity? Nothing! So, what is happening when we glorify God? Ever thought of that? We're told to glorify God but He's already infinite glory. Well, here's how it works...First, there's God's glory as it pertains to His character. Second, we glorify God by recognizing God's character and reflecting it back upon Him. When we produce fruit that is compatible with God's character, we are glorifying God. We are recognizing and reflecting back to Him by exclaiming what He already is. We're not adding anything to God's glory. It's the reflection of that glory extolling from the creature back to the Creator. We are acknowledging what He already is by nature. God's not growing in glory when we glorify Him, we're simply bouncing that glory back to Him. This does not just happen when we sing praise songs or hymns. It happens in every area of life. The Reformers used to say that "when the cobbler makes a good pair of shoes, he glorifies God!" This is what we mean by glorifying God. You are out in the world, planting a garden, laying wood floors, raising your children, loving your wife, respecting your husband, spending money wisely, paying your bills on time, building a fence, producing a good crop of peaches, re-finishing an old desk. These are all things that glorify God! And this is the way you ought to think about worship.

PRAISE TO THE GLORY OF THE SON

Something is going on in the Godhead, something we are not totally privy too. But it is clear that the plan of salvation is not first about saving men. Notice that there is no plan of salvation for angels at all! The plan certainly does save men, but God wants to reveal something to the human race and angels regarding His character and that results in the glorification of God, the reflecting of God's character back on God by His creatures. If you understand what I'm saying you'll understand why all men are not saved (Universalism). See, to save all men would not be the plan that revealed God's character to the utmost and would not maximize His creatures glorifying Him. This is why hell has a place in the plan of God. Hell itself is the ultimate declaration of God's holiness and justice. If there were no hell then this aspect of God's character would not be revealed to the utmost. God is making sure all of His character is revealed now and in eternity future. This is one reason the Bible teaches that even hell is eternal (the Bible denies the false teaching of

Annihilationism). These aspects of God's character do not disappear in eternity future. Hell is an eternal place that will eternally reveal the holy and just disposition of God.

Here in Eph. 1:12 **to the praise of his glory** refers to other attributes of God revealed in and through the work of the Son explained in vv. 7-11. The redemption through His blood reveals what aspects of God's character? *love, grace* and *justice*. *Love* is God's unconditionally giving himself to those whom He loves. *Grace* is not formally an attribute of God, but rather an expression of God's love. That is, grace is something that finds its source in God's love. Grace means God's undeserved favor. Redemption also reveals God's *justice*. That God is just, means that His attitude toward evil is uncompromising regardless of who might be involved. Because of His justness God's wrath had to be satisfied. Christ became the satisfaction, purchasing us, paying a price that far exceeded the cost which was finite (Eph. 1:7). His payment was according to the riches of grace, that is, His payment corresponds to His grace which is infinite (Eph. 1:7). Christ did not pay just enough for every member of the human race to be saved. Christ's payment cannot be measured by the number of people it saves or by any number of people that could have been saved. The payment can only be measured by God's grace which is infinite. So, if you ask, "How much did it cost Christ to pay for my sins?" the answer is "that payment cannot be measured"! In addition to this the Son gave us wisdom and insight (Eph. 1:8) to understand the new revelation regarding the mystery of His will in the Messianic Kingdom (Eph. 1:9-10). This reveals the grace of God as well. He could have saved us and left it at that, but no, He wanted to do much more. He lavished His grace upon us above and beyond salvation itself by giving us spiritual wisdom and insight to understand the will of God for the Messianic Kingdom, namely that all things would be united under Christ (Eph. 1:9-10). Not only that, but last week we found that ***we were made a heritage***. That's right; this pushes these truths one step further. Not only has He lavished all these spiritual blessings upon us, but we have become His own possession because of all He has done for us (Eph. 1:11). We are His work in history and will be with Him for eternity. These truths find as their ultimate purpose, ***the praise of His glory***. The word for ***praise*** is *epainos*. We are to praise God, to *glorify* God for who He is, for His character revealed through the plan of salvation. The word for ***glory*** is *doxa*. We looked at this word in v. 6 too. Remember, it has the basic meaning of "weight". So, we're talking about the one who carries weight. God has weight, like a big boss who throws his authority around. The ways God reveals His weight/glory reveals His reputation, what people are to see about God. God is concerned about His reputation, and ultimately, He will be glorified for His reputation. Not just by believers. As believers, we tend to think that in eternity, we will spend most of our time glorifying God by singing. Have you ever realized that believers aren't the only one's glorifying God? Unbelievers' will worship and glorify God, too. EVERY KNEE WILL

BOW EVERY TONGUE WILL CONFESS THAT JESUS CHRIST IS LORD (Isa. 45:23; 54:17; Rom. 14:11; Phil. 2:11). So, there must be much more to our time in heaven than singing “Just as I Was” day after day after day. Nothing wrong with singing, I’m just trying to make a point about eternity future. There’s much more than singing going on and it is all bringing glory to God.

You’ve got to recognize what God is doing through the prism of salvation. He’s revealing His character to responsible creatures, He’s revealing His glory, and we are bouncing this glory back to Him. What this means is that salvation of men is not God’s highest priority. God’s highest priority is to glorify Himself. Salvation of men is one key way in which God glorifies Himself, but He is also revealing and glorifying Himself through creation, conscience, and the Angelic Conflict. Glorifying God is so important that Paul makes this declaration the resounding truth in Eph. 1:3-14. *To the praise of His glory* is announced at the end of each section (cf. v. 6, 12, 14). If one thing is to be remembered it is that the plan of redemption is not about men it is about God. It is about glorifying God. Things like election and predestination; these details of the Redemptive package are primarily revelatory devices designed by God before the foundation of the world in order to bring glory to Himself!

How God secures our eternity with Him is the subject of the Spirit’s work in the plan of redemption next week (Eph. 1:13-14). After that we’ll review the sentence (vv. 3-14) and the Doctrine of the Triunity of God before we move to Paul’s prayer for all believers in 1:15ff.

ⁱ Calvin, John, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (),

ⁱⁱ Some think that the ability to explain these two things lies beyond human ability.

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