

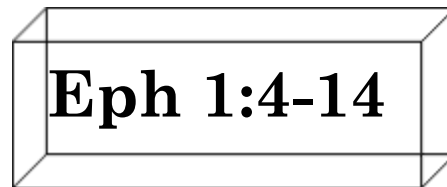
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C0421 -- May 26, 2004 -- Ephesians 1:6 -- Goal of Election and Predestination

Tonight, we will finish the first section of the longest sentence in the Greek NT. Beginning in v. 3 Paul gives a summary statement of vv. 4-14. This is a very Hebrew way of writing. It was common to give a summary and then expand in Hebrew thinking. For example, Gen. 1-2. Genesis 1 is a brief account of the creation of the entire universe. Genesis 2 expands upon day 6, giving the details. (Ezek. 38-39 follows a similar style). So, what this means is that Paul is saying nothing more in vv. 4-14 than he is saying in v. 3. vv. 4-14 are just an amplification of everything contained in v. 3. So, if you wanted a short statement summing up everything in vv. 4-14 you would just quote v. 3. Now, if you want to unpack v. 3, you would look to vv. 4-14. If v. 3 is the box then vv. 4-14 are everything in the box. You have to open the box to see everything in the box so that's why Paul launches into this complex sentence.



Outside of Box



Inside of Box

***Everything in verses 4-14 is included in v. 3**

The reason vv. 3-14 are a single sentence is because the Plan of Salvation is so complex and so interrelated that it's difficult to separate one component from another and so Paul puts them together in a single thought or sentence. What we find in the box is the role of each person of the Trinity in Redemption. Tonight, we'll finish vv. 4-6: God the Father's

Role in Redemption and next week we'll launch into vv. 7-12: God the Son's Role in Redemption. Vv. 13-14 are God the Spirit's works in the Plan of Redemption.

Last week we looked at the phrase *en agape* at the end of verse 4. We said there are four Greek words for "love". *agapao*, *erao*, *storge*, and *phileo*. Only two of these are used in the Greek NT; *agape* and *phileo*. The two words that stand in contrast are *agape* and *eros*. Leon Morris says, "": "*eros* has two principal characteristics: it is a love of the worthy and it is a love that desires to possess. *Agape* is in contrast at both points: it is not a love of the worthy, and it is not a love that desires to possess. On the contrary, it is a love given quite irrespective of merit, and it is a love that seeks to give." True *agape* love seeks the highest good for another individual and the highest good is always, without exception, God's will for the other person's life. Scripture defines the boundaries of *agape* love. For example, Scripture decides how I love my wife. Many people think how you love another person is a subjective area of life and is maximized by impulse and sincerity. This is absolutely anti-biblical. The Scriptures define how to love another whether it is inside or outside of marriage. Christ sets the standard for love as we find when we ask the question, "how did the Son love the Father?" By obeying the Father's commandments. True love is tied up to the commandments of God because when following the commands, you are in the will of God. Remember, true *agape* love always seeks the highest good for another individual and the highest good is always God's will for the other person's life.

We also had to ask the question, what does *en agape* refer to in verse 4? We found that the best option was to see *in love* as referring back to the way or manner in which we are *holy and blameless before Him*. We will be *holy and blameless before Him in love*. This phrase is the nearest antecedent and has support from the other 5 times Paul uses *en agape* in Ephesians. Paul always uses *en agape* at the end of a thought and never at the beginning, and it always refers to the immediately preceding clause (cf. Eph. 1:4; 3:17; 4:2, 15f; 5:2).

In verse 5 we looked at the cause of our election in the plan of God; namely, predestination to adoption. We dealt with the word *predestination* which is in the Greek *proorizo*. *proorizo* is a compound word that comes from two Greek words, *pro* meaning "before" and *orizo* meaning "to set a boundary, to separate, to mark out". It's the word from which we get the word *horizon*, the apparent intersection between the earth and sky. The word is only used six times in the NT (Acts 4:28; Rom. 8:29, 30; 1 Co. 2:7; Eph. 1:5, 11). Perhaps the best way to understand the word is by saying it means "to pre-plan". *Predestination* word doesn't have so much to do with the *people* as it does with the *destiny of people*. Election has to do with the people. For example, let's say you plan a party. *proorizo* would have to do with planning the party, election would have to do with the people you invite to

the party. But the planning of the party beforehand corresponds to **predestination** and the inviting of the people beforehand corresponds to **election**. So, the two are different. Predestination is a pre-planned destiny to which He elects people. So, basically it means to pre-plan or plan ahead. Well, what exactly is the pre-planned destiny? We found that in Rom. 8:29 we are predestined to be conformed to the image of Christ. In other words, our destiny is to share the same destiny as Jesus Christ. . So, if you want a quick sidewalk definition of predestine it means to “share the destiny of Christ”.

In Eph. 1:5 Paul is basically saying the same thing. There he says we are **predestined to adoption**. But what adoption did Paul have in mind? We settled in on the idea that what Paul had in mind was the adoption laws of the Romans. Rome was the rule of the day and so Roman adoption laws would be common knowledge for those in Ephesus. We found that to understand our adoption by God the Father that we had to first understand the Structure of the Roman Family.

First, we had the Father, he had absolute power, like a mafia lord. He had so much power that he could kill anyone in his family and not be convicted of murder. So, he had absolute power of life and death over every individual in the family. Second, the Father had absolute power over all possessions in the family. So, he had absolute power to dispose of or purchase any family possessions as he willed. Now, when the father died the next father of the family would be his eldest son. But sometimes a problem arose because the father did not have a natural son; and so, when he passed the childbearing years, he would adopt a son to take his position as absolute power in the next generation. This would ensure that his possessions were kept in the family name into the next generation. Well, how did the adoption take place? Roman adoption had two steps: *Step one* consisted of the release of the natural son. The father of the natural son would sell his son three times to the new father. The new father would release his adopted son the first two times and upon release the son would immediately fall back under his natural father’s control. Upon the third sale, the adopted son was freed from all authority under his natural father. *Step two* was the formation of a new bond between adopted son and new father. The new father now had absolute authority and power over the adopted son. He would retain this control until death or until the adopter freed the son. The son was no longer responsible to his natural father but only to his newly acquired father. The purpose of this adoption was so that the adopted son could take the position of a natural son in order to continue the family line and maintain property ownership. This adopted son became the *patria potestas* in the next generation.

Now, as Paul had this in mind it gives us insight into our adoption as Christians. This is why Paul used the Roman Family structure. He wants to illustrate that you’ve been adopted

by God the Father in the same way that a son was adopted into a new Roman family. This means that even though you were once labeled “sons of disobedience” and “children of wrath” (Eph. 2:2-3), you have absolutely no responsibility or obligation to your old father, the devil (John 8:38, 44), the one who is the prince of the power of the air (Eph. 2:2). Instead, you are now God’s sons and daughters and He controls your lives and property. Since God does not die you will always be under His control and authority. You will never become the one in control and authority. This is why God has the right to discipline believers (Heb. 12:5-11). This is advantageous for both the Father and the adopted son or daughter. It is advantageous for you and God because you now possess and pass on His name, enjoy the privileges of being His son, and possess every spiritual blessing. As an unbeliever you were under a tyrant, the devil; a thief who came to steal, kill, and destroy. But, in contrast, as saints you are under the authority of one who is loving, caring, and wants you to have an abundant life. While we presently enjoy this newly acquired status of adoption the full realization and joy will be when we are resurrected and no longer able to be tempted by the devil to return to him.

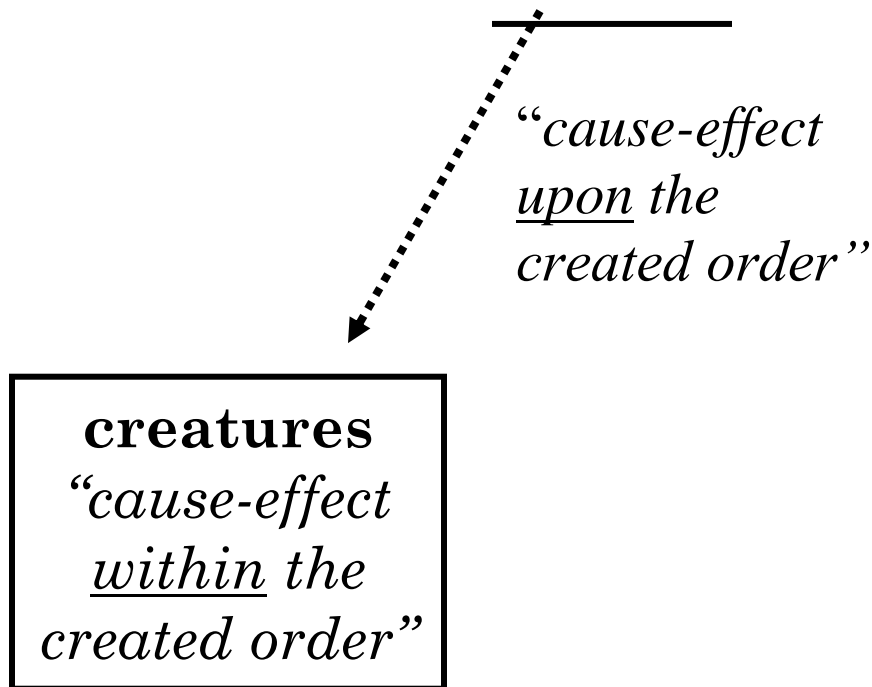
This adoption took place ***through Jesus Christ***. This was ***dia*** with the ***genitive*** which always indicates *agency* or *means*. The *means* by which we were adopted was through Jesus Christ, particularly His sacrificial work on the cross. If it was ***through Jesus Christ*** and not ***to Jesus Christ*** then who are we adopted to? We are adopted ***to Himself***. ***To Himself*** therefore refers to God the Father not God the Son. ***To*** is the Greek preposition ***eis*** which is both *directional* and *relational*. We are adopted ***to*** the Father and ***into*** the Father. We therefore have a new relationship through Jesus Christ with the Father. That’s Paul’s point. This all came about because God pre-planned our destiny to be the destiny of Jesus Christ.

This all came about ***according to the good pleasure of His will***. This is ***kata*** with the ***accusative*** which always indicates the *standard* or *measure*. So, the standard by which the Father’s actions were completed was His ***good pleasure***. ***Good pleasure*** comes from the Greek word *eudokia* which is always a reference to God’s sovereignty. Since God is good, whatever God does is right; so, when God does according to His ***good pleasure***, He always does right. The problem people have with this is they think of the times when they did according to their ***good pleasure*** and then they apply that to God. When we do according to our ***good pleasure*** it is usually evil but when God does ***according to His good pleasure*** it is always good and right and perfect. ***Of His will*** is a genitive of *source* meaning that God’s ***good pleasure*** finds its *origin* or *source* in God’s ***will***, not in man’s will or any other conditioning element.

Finally, we had a short discussion of Divine Sovereignty and Human Freedom

The relationship is difficult to understand because we're limited finite creatures. We talked about two types of freedom; *indeterministic* and *deterministic*. *Indeterminism* at base says that a person can always choose contrary to the choice made. Given this type of freedom I see no way for God to be in control of the universe. The Bible does not ever say that man has this kind of freedom. The other type of freedom is *determinism*. Some forms of determinism are fatalistic or make the universe an impersonal robotic system. But the form of determinism I taught was *soft determinism* or *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 them by an irresistible argument (e.g., if you leave the room, you'll find that a brand-new car is waiting for you). I am not saying this is *the* solution but it is *a* solution. But even this may not be the best way to describe how it all works. However, I do think that this protects both God's sovereignty over the entire universe and genuine human responsibility or freedom and I am convinced it makes sense of the passages I mentioned at the end of last week's lesson. Let's look at one of those briefly, turn to Acts 4:27-28. Here every individual involved was doing what they wanted to do but at the same time they were doing what God's hand predestined to occur. They were not being forced to do something against their will, desires, or wishes. That's 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 *indeterministic* view of freedom to make sense of that passage because if *indeterminism* were true then Herod, Pontius Pilate, the Gentiles, and Israel could have always chosen not to nail Jesus to the cross. That would mean that God was not in control of the universe because God's plan would have been thwarted. So, at least *compatibilism* or *soft determinism* makes sense of this passage in a satisfactory way. However, this may not be the only way to understand this and similar passages. If you are hesitant about this understanding, I will show you probably the safest way to think about divine sovereignty and human freedom. To do this you have to first accept and understand the Creator-creature distinction. God is in the open box because He's unlimited and infinite. We as creatures are in the closed box because we are limited and finite. When people try to resolve free will and sovereignty, they tend to forget this distinction.

| **CREATOR**



*Cause-effect upon the created order is not identical to cause-effect within the created order.

The way they do this may not be intentionally but they do it anyway. The way they do this is by thinking that cause-effect within the created order is identical to cause-effect upon the created order. This destroys the Creator-creature distinction. It makes God’s transcendence upon the created order subject to cause-effect relationships within the created order. But the cause-effect upon the created order is not the same as cause-effect within the created order so we can’t say that there is a 1 to 1 correspondence between how God causes things to come to pass and how we understand cause and effect on earth. We are not really privy to understanding how cause-effect upon the created order really works, nor are we able to comprehend it but God knows precisely how it works and it is perfectly rational and there is no contradiction, that we do know.

(3) Goal: Praise of the Glory of His Grace (1:6)

Greek Text: 1:6-8 eivj e;painon do,xhj th/j ca,ritoj auvtou/ h-j evcari,twsen h`ma/j evn tw/| hvgaphme,nw|Å

Translation: 1:6 to the praise of the glory of His grace that He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.

ειj e;painon do,xhj th/j ca,ritoj auvtou, “to the praise of the glory of His grace”. Another *eis* introduces this clause. This is the third *eis* in verses 5-6. The first was predestination *to* (*eis*) adoption, so it was *directional* or *positional*. The second was through Jesus Christ *to* (*eis*) Himself, which was *directional* and *relational*. The third is *to* the praise of the glory which is the *goal*. All of the Father’s actions in redemption have as their *goal* praise to God. The word for “praise” is *epainos* and is found three times in this section. First, in v. 6 it is referring to the Father, in v. 12 it refers to the Son, and in v. 14 it refers to the Holy Spirit. All three Persons of the Trinity are praised for their role in the plan of redemption. In this context the Father is to be praised by believers for predestination to adoption which was the cause of His active election. The next word glory is *doxa* and *doxa* has the basic meaning of “weight”. What we’re talking about is the one who carries weight. That’s right, God has weight, we’re talking about poundage here boys. God is like the big boss, He’s the one who truly carries weight. His weight is sufficient to make a deep impact on others. Ultimately this word is referring to “reputation”. God and all those made in His image have a “reputation”. Even certain angels and animals have “reputations”. A careful reader of the OT will notice that God is concerned about His reputation. God keeps saying “My name” will I make known. When God says “My name” He’s talking about His reputation going forth. Not only does God have a reputation among men but He is concerned about His reputation. What reputation does God want to reveal to His creation (including the angels)? He wants to reveal His essence. He wants to manifest His essence to creation. The way this works out is that when God’s character is manifested to creation God is magnified or glorified by men and angels. But God is not the only one who has a reputation. All individuals have an essential nature. You have a nature; if you’re a believer you have two natures; an old sin nature and a new regenerate nature. Your nature; either old sin nature or regenerate nature makes an impression on others. You are making an impact either for God or against God. This is why it is so important to operate out of your regenerate nature. When you do you pass on the reputation of God through your reputation. You reveal God’s character before men. You, because it is Christ in you, make God look good. You show of His character rather than your own character. So, the fact that God predestined and elected before time and made manifest in time reveals God’s character so that God is to be praised by men and His glory is revealed.

I don’t know if you realize it or not but this is one of the cornerstone truths of Dispensationalism. Here at Fredericksburg Bible Church, we recognize the distinguishable arrangements in the outworking of God’s master plan. We recognize that God has worked

differently in different ages. Usually, people recognize seven such dispensations throughout history; Innocence, Conscience, Human Government, Promise, Law, Grace/Church, Kingdom but seven dispensations is not the essence of dispensationalism. Some dispensationalists hold to as few as 2 dispensations and others as many as 13. What are the essentials of dispensationalism?

ESSENTIALS OF DISPENSATIONALISM

- 1) A consistent normal interpretation of all of Scripture including prophecy**
- 2) A distinction between God's program for Israel and God's program for the Church**
- 3) God's ultimate purpose is to glorify Himself**

You've got to recognize this third essential of dispensationalism. What it means is that salvation of men is not God's highest priority. God's highest priority is to glorify Himself. Salvation of men is only one way in which God glorifies Himself. He is also glorifying Himself through the Angelic Conflict, and through what has been created. This is so important that God the Holy Spirit made this declaration the resounding truth in Eph. 1:3-14. 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. The details of the Redemptive package are therefore revelatory devices designed by God before the foundation of the world in order to bring glory to Himself! What does it mean then that this praise is to *the glory of His grace*? This is a difficult phrase but what it means is that God is glorified for His reputation which displays grace. We looked at the word grace way back in v. 2. It's the Greek word *charis* and it means "God's unmerited or undeserved favor in providing salvation for sinners." Here it focuses on how God the Father displayed grace. He displayed grace by pre-planning our destiny to be the destiny of Christ and securing that by actively electing us so that we would be holy and blameless before Him in love forever! That is the kind of reputation that God the Father is to be praised for and which brings glory to Himself.

h-j evcari,twsen h`ma/j, "that He freely bestowed on us". The words *freely bestow* come from the Greek word *ekaritosen* which is only used twice in the NT (Luke 1:28; Eph. 1:6). The interpretation of this word is critical to Protestant and Catholic theology. This is what the whole Reformation was about. How is a man justified? Is justification by faith alone

(Protestantism) or is justification by faith + works (Catholicism)? The two differ radically in their understanding of this word (*ekaritosen*). First, many church fathers interpreted the word to mean that “God infuses grace into the individual” so that they undergo a gradual transformation of becoming acceptable to God. This is the Roman Catholic view of justification. Justification in Roman Catholicism is a process of grace being infused into the individual through the seven sacraments. The claim is that justification is not an *imputation* of Christ’s righteousness but the *infusion* of divine grace that enables the individual to cooperate with God in the justification process. They understand Eph. 1:6 to be saying that grace was infused into the individual. Here is a chart illustrating the essential differences between Protestant and Catholic Theology on Justification.

<u>Protestantism</u>	<u>Roman Catholicism</u>
1. Forensic	Legal Fiction
2. Synthetic	Analytic
3. Imputation	Infusion
4. No Human Merit	Congruous Merit
5. Faith Alone	Faith + Works

Forensic justification means that justification is a legal declaration. The question is how can God call a sinner righteous? Roman Catholics said this was a **Legal Fiction**. They argued that God cannot call a man righteous while the man is still a sinner. A man must truly be righteous before God can call him righteous. Protestants answered this question by turning to Romans 4 and Abraham as the example of God justifying the ungodly, not the godly. Protestants quoted Romans 4:5, “*But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned as righteousness,*” The cry of the Protestant Reformers is that you can be both a sinner and justified at the same time. So, Protestant justification is a forensic declaration. God calls us righteous while yet sinners. Catholicism rejected this saying it was a **Legal Fiction**. The second word to describe Protestant justification is **Synthetic**. This means that something is added or combined to the sinner. It is the merits of Christ that are added to the sinner. It is not the person’s merit but Christ’s merit added to the sinner. The way this happens is through **Imputation**. Imputation is the merits of Christ credited to or placed in the account of the sinner (**Rom. 4:3, 5**). It means God considers or reckons a sinner to be righteous based on Christ’s merit and nothing of the sinners. The Catholic view is **Analytic** meaning that God has to analyze, study a person in order to determine if they are righteous of their own merit. How a man has merit is through **Infusion of grace** by the power of Christ. Power is infused into the

sinner through the sacraments so that the individual is transformed to the point where God can call them righteous. So, the basis of Protestant **Imputation** is Christ Himself while the basis of Catholic **Infusion** is the inner state of the individual. In Protestant theology then justification precedes sanctification and in Catholic theology sanctification precedes justification. This is why the Catholic priest absolves a person's sins just before that person dies, so that they will be found without sin when they pass out of this life. This is why in Roman Catholic theology you can never know whether you are really saved or not. The fourth difference is that Protestant theology teaches **No Human Merit**. This means that justification is not based on any human merit but is based solely on Christ Himself. Protestants took seriously Titus 3:5 "*He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy,*". Catholic theology teaches **Congruous Merit**. This means that we work in cooperation with infused grace so that we can do good deeds, in the power of Christ, which are necessary for justification. Justification is a process, not a done deal at the moment you believe, but it is human merit cooperating with Christ's merit. Finally, the last point of difference in this area is that Protestant theology teaches that justification is **By Faith Alone**. Faith is not mere intellectual activity but is a knowledge of and trust solely in Jesus Christ for one's eternal life. Faith is not what saves you, faith is an instrument through which you are saved. Salvation is by grace through faith alone without any help or cooperation from the sinner. The sinner must believe in order to be saved but it is not the sinners faith which saves him. The Catholic position is that a man is justified **By Faith and Works**. Faith is required but not faith alone. It is faith + works. The passage they go use to prove this is James 2:24, "*You see that a man is justified by works, and not by faith alone.*" They say here we have a direct statement in the Bible that says that justification is not by faith alone as the Protestants say. The problem with this is that James is writing to justified individuals, not individuals working toward justification (cf. James 1:18, 19; 2:1). James exhorts us to not be hearers only but doers of the word. James is talking about hearing the word, accepting the word, and doing the word. He's not talking about how to become a believer but how a believer should do the word, not in order to be justified but because he is already justified. The immediate context of the controversial James 2:24 is bracketed by 2:13 and 3:1, both of which mention the judgment seat of Christ. The only people who will be at the judgment seat of Christ are believers. And rewards are what are issued at the judgment seat of Christ. Therefore, it makes total sense that James would be urging believers to put their faith to work, which is the topic of James 2:14-2:26. A faith that doesn't have works isn't producing anything worthy of reward so it is a dead faith. James never says that faith without works does not save. "James does not say that works are *essential* to faith or that faith is unimportant. His argument was that works are *evidence* of faith."ⁱ This is evidence before men because men cannot see the heart. So, all James is teaching is that your

justification is evidenced by works. Justification declares itself before men through the doing of good works. It does not teach that works are a part of being justified before God but rather that justification before men can only be evidenced by good works. People can only see the evidence of your faith by works. But James never says that works are essential to saving faith. In harmony with this Paul writes that ***“For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law”*** (Romans 3:28) and speaks of justification as a past completed action in Romans 5:1 ***“Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,”***.

Let’s return to Ephesians 1:6. Paul is not talking about the infusion of grace to individuals in the process of justification. He is talking about what God the Father has done in the plan of salvation. These people are already saved individuals. Paul calls them *saints* in v. 1. What Paul is saying is that God the Father freely bestowed believers with grace in the person and work of Jesus Christ. There is no hint of our merit cooperating with Christ’s merit. What the Father has done alone is in view. God the Father was free, not conditioned upon any human response or human behavior. He was absolutely free. God has free will. He freely bestowed this grace upon us “in the Beloved”.

evn tw/ hvgaphme,nw|, “in the Beloved”. The preposition *en* denotes close relationship. Thus, God the Father freely bestowed grace upon us by putting us in relationship with ***the Beloved***. The Beloved is of course, God the Son, who’s work in the Plan of Redemption is given in vv. 7-12 which we’ll develop in the coming weeks.

ⁱ Walvoord & Zuck, *Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament* (Colorado Springs, CO; Chariot Victor Publishing; 1999), 826.

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