

## **Ephesians 1:11-14 Answers** **The Blessing of Election & Predestination, Part B**

### **Review:**

**Who wrote the letter to the saints in Ephesus?** It was written by the apostle Paul, who planted the church there.

**Where was Ephesus?** It was in what is now modern Turkey.

**Where was Paul when he wrote it?** Paul wrote it from house arrest in Rome, around A.D. 62.

### **Overview:**

The letter to the saints in Ephesus has six chapters and can be divided into two parts:

Chapters 1-3 are theological (doctrine/belief); chapters 4-6 are practical (duty/behavior)

Chapters 1-3 concern the Wealth of the Believer; chapters 4-6 concern the Walk of the Believer.

Chapters 1-3 concern the Blessings of the Believer; chapters 4-6 concern the Behavior of the Believer.

**Introduction:** God truly deserves our blessing! The Greek for “blessed” (1:3) is *eulogéto*s which literally means “good words”. Enough good words cannot be said about what God has done for us in Christ. Ephesians 1:1-14 is an amazing blessing. In it, Paul blessed God for all the blessings God has bestowed on us in Christ.

In the last episode, we discussed the first part of the blessing, 1:3-10. In particular we explored the blessing of election and predestination. Today we’ll tackle the second part (1:11-14) and also attempt to go on further into chapter 1.

Paul wrote that God elected (chose) certain people before they were ever born. **What was the purpose for which God chose these people?** See 1:4. God chose them to be holy and blameless. The doctrine of election is not some abstract theory with no real world application. Those God has chosen were chosen for the purpose of being holy and blameless.

Some Arminian churches have truncated the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints to simply, “once saved always saved.” The problem with this is that it can lead people to the false conclusion that a person could be saved and not experience any life change. It is clear from Ephesians 1:4 that those who have been elected by God desire to be holy and blameless.

On the other hand, some Calvinistic churches have down played the fact that God’s people are chosen by God unto holiness. During the days of the Reformation, when there was no separation of church and state, every citizen was automatically a church member. This created a practical problem of a great many very ungodly church members. Whereas the truth of justification by faith was thundered from the pulpit, the truth of election unto holiness was sometimes neglected or not enforced with church discipline.

**According to what we studied last week, when did this choosing (election) take place?** See 1:4. God's choosing of us took place before the foundation of the world, in eternity past.

Election happened in Christ, in eternity past, so that we would be holy and blameless.

**A word that commonly goes along with election (being chosen) is predestination. According to 1:4b-6, for what purpose did God predestine us?** (Note: The sentence starts in 1:4b with "In love"). In love, God predestined us for adoption as Sons to the praise of His grace.

**Write on Board:** Chosen in Christ for holiness, Predestined in love for adoption.

**Why is it significant that we were predestined "in love" (1:4b)?** It is common for people to rail against the doctrine of predestination. Election and predestination are seen as negative doctrines wherein an almost hateful and miserly God grudgingly ekes out salvation to a very few people. In contrast, the Scripture clearly states that our predestination was based in God's love (not hate) and that He has lavished blessings and grace upon us. The doctrine of election is not something to be afraid of; it is the fruit of God's amazing love.

**Summary:** We were chosen unto holiness and predestined unto salvation.

**Based on 1:5, whose will determines who gets predestined?** The whole process was "according to the purpose of his (God's) will".

**Based on 1:6, once you have a proper understanding of predestination, what should it cause you to do?** A correct understanding of it should cause us to praise God's glorious grace. A proper view of predestination will not bewilder you, it will bless you ("he has blessed us in the beloved").

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**\*\*\*What did God do to guarantee our spiritual inheritance (1:11-14)?** Those who believe the gospel have been "sealed" with the Holy Spirit, 1:13.

**1. What is the inheritance that Paul wrote about (1:11-14)?** Paul did not here state exactly what the inheritance is; it was evidently so obvious to the readers that Paul did not feel a need to elaborate on it. The inheritance is usually understood to be eternal life in Christ.

**2. According to 1:11, what was the basis of our predestination? What was it based upon?** It is based upon, or according to, the purpose of him (God) who works all things according to the counsel of his (God's) will.

**Tunnel of Time:** Sometimes people want to explain away predestination by saying that God looked down the tunnel of time to see who would one day believe in Jesus, and based on what He saw, God in turn responded to this foreseen faith and predestined all who believe to be saved. Under this view, predestination ultimately is based on man's will, man's decision, on man choosing to believe.

**Example:** In the tunnel of time view, God is merely responding to man's decision. God is like Diana Ross who sang, "if you feel like giving me a lifetime of devotion, I second that emotion."

**3. Based on 1:12, what is the ultimate purpose of predestination?** It is ultimately "to the praise of his glory". It is not about us; it is about God. The truth of the matter is that if God had looked down the tunnel of time to see who, if given the opportunity, would believe in Jesus, He would have seen that *no one* would believe in Jesus. Yet despite foreseen ill-will, God in love graciously chose some people for mercy and predestined them to believe in Jesus.

**What unique position were Paul and the Ephesians readers in, according to 1:12?** They were among the first to hope in Christ.

**4. All believers are sealed with the promised Holy Spirit. What does it mean for something to be "sealed" (1:13)?** It is from the verb *sphragizo* which literally means to mark with a seal (BAGD, p. 796). For example, companies have corporate seals that are impressed on legal documents. It is a sign of **authentication**. It could also refer to the marking of an animal for **ownership** (like a brand). God sent the Holy Spirit to live in believers as a mark (seal) of ownership and identification (Hendriksen, p 91). We belong to Jesus!

**5. What is the evidence in a person's life that he has been sealed with the Holy Spirit (1:13)?** Hendriksen says it is "not merely or mainly as the result of agonizing self-searching to see whether all the 'marks' of having been elected are present, but rather by a living faith in the triune God, as revealed in Christ, a faith 'working through love' (Gal. 5:6)" (p. 91).

**Steps of Salvation:** First you were "chosen" and "predestined" by God the Father (1:11) then you "heard" the Gospel (1:13), then you "believed" in Jesus and then you "were sealed" (1:13) by the Holy Spirit.

**The Trinity:** All three members of the Trinity are involved in the salvation process. The Father planned it, the Son executed it and the Spirit applies it.

**"You heard" (1:13):** Just as God predestined the *end* (salvation), He also predestined the *means* (the chosen at some point in time have to hear and believe the Gospel). We need to open our mouths and tell people about Jesus!

**ESV Romans 10:14 . . .** how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching?

**"The word of truth" (1:13):** It bears stating that we are not saved by the *plan* of salvation; we are saved by the *Man* of Salvation (the Lord Jesus). The Gospel itself saves no one.

**6. Paul further wrote that the Holy Spirit is a guarantee. What is a "guarantee" (1:14)?** See 2 *Corinthians 1:21-22*. The Greek, *arrabon* is a "first installment, down payment, pledge" that obligates the purchasing party to make further payments (BAGD, p. 109). The KJV translates this as "earnest"; the NASV says "pledge." This is the modern Greek word for an engagement ring (Google Translate).

ESV **2 Corinthians 1:21-22** . . . it is God who . . . has also put his seal on us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.

**Pantheon Contrast:** The Greek and Romans gods were known for being capricious and whimsical, with men never knowing how long their favor was going to last. In contrast, God, in love, in eternity past, chose and predestined His people for favor. He will never leave us nor forsake us. His love is going to last. Nothing can ever frustrate God's plan (Hendriksen, p. 89), not persecution, not financial loss, not sickness, not the death of a loved one, nothing.

**7. When had the Holy Spirit been “promised” prior to this (1:13)?** *See John 14:15-17, 25, Acts 1:1-4, 2:1ff.* Jesus, before His ascension, promised that after the left He would send the Holy Spirit in His place. This was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost (Ac 2).

**8. The Holy Spirit has been given to us as a seal and a guarantee “until we acquire possession” of our inheritance (1:14). When will we acquire this possession?** *See Romans 8:20-23.* Although we have eternal life now, we will still die physically. However, upon Jesus' return, we will be resurrected and given glorified bodies and the earth will be released from its bondage to decay.

### So What?

**9. What did you learn about predestination from 1:11-12?**

**10. What did you learn about the salvation process from 1:11-14?**

**11. What role does the Holy Spirit play in keeping us saved (1:13-14)?**

\*\*\*\* = ask this question before reading the text aloud. This is put people's minds in gear and them something to look for as the text is read. It causes focus.

- These lessons are designed for a 45 minute session and are based on the ESV.

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