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# The Summation of All Things in Christ

## Studies in Ephesians with a Local Church Emphasis

LESSON VI : OPENING EULOGY PART ONE: THE ELECTIVE PURPOSE OF GOD THE FATHER (1:3-14)

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### Greeting

<sup>1</sup> Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God,

To the saints who are in Ephesus, and faithful in Christ Jesus:

<sup>2</sup> Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

### Spiritual Blessings in Christ

#### God the Father

<sup>3</sup> 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, <sup>4</sup> 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, <sup>5</sup> having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, <sup>6</sup> *to the praise of the glory of His grace*, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.

#### God the Son

<sup>7</sup> In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace <sup>8</sup> which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, <sup>9</sup> having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, <sup>10</sup> that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth — in Him. <sup>11</sup> In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, <sup>12</sup> that we who first trusted in Christ should be *to the praise of His glory*.

#### God the Holy Spirit

<sup>13</sup> In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, <sup>14</sup> who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, *to the praise of His glory*. (NKJV)

## Left-Overs from Last Week's Lesson

**“HOW MAY I KNOW I AM ONE OF THE ELECT?”** — If God chooses some out of mankind to be saved, a natural question would be how I am to know if I was one of those chosen? M. R. DeHaan does a good job answering that question:

*Would you really like to know that you are one of God's elect? Then come as a poor sinner and accept His invitation; for He says, “Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden” (Matt. 11:28). If you do that, you are one of God's elect. Remember election is God's business, leave it with Him! Believing is YOUR business; do it, and God will not fail! Jesus puts the two together in one verse: “All that the Father giveth Me shall come to me.” That's GOD'S part. But now notice the rest of the verse: “And him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out” (John 6:37). That's YOUR part! If you will come, you can rest assured that it was the work of God Himself which motivated you. [M. R. DeHaan; from Our Daily Bread]*

Spurgeon says essentially the same thing, in a way only he can say it:

*“Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God.”* — 1 Thessalonians 1:4 Many persons want to know their election before they look to Christ, but they cannot learn it thus, it is only to be discovered by “looking unto Jesus.” If you desire to ascertain your own election; — after the following manner, shall you assure your heart before God. Do you feel yourself to be a lost, guilty sinner? go straightway to the cross of Christ, and tell Jesus so, and tell Him that you have read in the Bible, “Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.” Tell Him that He has said, “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” Look to Jesus and believe on Him, and you shall make proof of your election directly, for so surely as thou believest, thou art elect. If you will give yourself wholly up to Christ and trust Him, then you are one of God's chosen ones; but if you stop and say, “I want to know first whether I am elect,” you ask you know not what. Go to Jesus, be you never so guilty, just as you are. Leave all curious inquiry about election alone. Go straight to Christ and hide in His wounds, and you shall know your election. The assurance of the Holy Spirit shall be given to you, so that you shall be able to say, “I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to Him.” Christ was at the everlasting council: He can tell you whether you were chosen or not; but you cannot find it out in any other way. Go and put your trust in Him, and His answer will be — “I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.”

There will be no doubt about His having chosen you, when you have chosen Him. “Sons we are through God’s election, who in Jesus Christ believe.” [Spurgeon, *Morning and Evening*]

**ELECTION IS NOT THE GOSPEL** — Tied together with the above question is the point that we are to preach the gospel to reach souls for Christ, not election. *Is election then to be ignored?* — no, that is not what I am trying to say. Paul preached the whole counsel of God while teaching at Ephesus (Acts 20:27) including election as is obvious in his Ephesian letter. And although Paul was only in Thessalonica for two to three weeks (Acts 17:1-12; note v2), he talks of their being chosen by God in his first letter to them (1 Thess 1:4) so they were aware of the doctrines of grace even though Paul was only there a short time. But the gospel is not “*Are you one of the elect?*” The gospel message is rather, “*Do you know yourself to be a sinner, guilty and wretched before a righteous, spotless God? Do you know you are helpless in your sins, never able to be pleasing enough for this holy God to be let into His heaven? Do you know you need the Savior, God’s only Son Jesus, Who died on the cross and rose again from the grave to save sinners? Then come and trust Him and Him alone for your deliverance from eternal wrath.*”

The best illustration of this of which I am aware has been repeated again and again over many decades. *Pastor Harry Ironside gave the illustration of a sinner coming to the door of salvation (John 10:9). Above the door was a sign saying, “Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely” (Rev. 22:17). The sinner responds to this gracious invitation, trusts Christ and is gloriously saved. He now turns around and looks at the door through which he had just entered. He sees above the door another sign saying, “Chosen in Him before the foundation of the world” (Eph. 1:4). Both are true. Both are taught in the Bible. Both must be believed.*

## The Selection of the Father (1:4-6)

*According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.* (KJV)

*For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will — to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves.* (NIV)

*according as He did choose us in him before the foundation of the world, for our being holy and unblemished before Him, in love, having foreordained us to the adoption of sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, in which He did make us accepted in the beloved,* (Young’s Literal Translation)

**in him** — ἐν αὐτῷ [en autō] the reference is to Christ in v. 2: God chose “us” in connection with Christ. This does not mean God chose “us” because we chose Christ, that would go against the teaching of this entire passage by placing God under obligation to man. Nor is election based upon God looking down through eternity and seeing who will believe because v. 5 states election is based upon the will of God, not man. “[G]od chose believers in connection with or through Christ’s work of redemption.... God chose the believer for his glory and that it had to be done in connection with the redemption accomplished in Christ. God cannot bring sinful humans into his presence forever without Christ having paid for sin.” [Hoehner, 177] “The purpose of election is very comprehensive. It is the purpose of God to bring his people to holiness, sonship, and eternal glory. He never intended to do this irrespective of Christ. On the contrary it was his purpose, as revealed in Scripture, to bring his people to these exalted privileges through a Redeemer. It was in Christ as their head and representative they were chosen to holiness and eternal life, and therefore in virtue of what he was to do in their behalf. There is a federal union with Christ which is antecedent to all actual union, and is the source of it. *God gave a people to his Son in the covenant of redemption. Those included in that covenant, and because they are included in it — in other words, because they are in Christ as their head and representative — receive in time the gift of the Holy Spirit and all other benefits of redemption. Their voluntary union with Christ by faith is not the ground of their federal union, but, on the contrary, their federal union is the ground of their voluntary union. It is, therefore, in Christ, i.e. as united to him in the covenant of redemption that the people of God are elected to eternal life and to all the blessings therewith connected.*” [Hodge, 30f]

**before the foundation of the world** — πρὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου [pro katabolēs kosmou] denoting *the time of election*. Foundation = καταβολῆς [katabolēs] is a compound word, literally “down” + “throw” and therefore has the basic meaning of “throwing down.” The verb is used of “throwing down” seed in the ground (sowing), “throwing down” seed in a female (conception), stones “thrown down” for the foundation or starting point of a building. The noun form can have the same connotation of a starting point. The noun is used 11x in the NT and all but once is it followed by “world.” Once it is preceded by the preposition εἰς [eis, “into”], seven times by ἀπό [apo, “from”] and three times by πρὸ [pro, “before”]. When used as “from” it has the sense “from the foundation of the world,” e.g., Jesus told parables to reveal things hidden “from the foundation of the world” (Matt 13:35). But here it is “before,” in the sense of an action occurring before the foundation or creation of the world. Other examples: Jesus states God loved Him before the foundation of the world (Jn 17:24). *Thus God chose the believer before the world was even created, in eternity past. “Such language functions to give believers assurance of God’s purposes for them. Its force is that God’s choice of them was a free decision not dependent on temporal circumstances but rooted in the depth of his nature. To say that election in Christ took place before the foundation of the world is to underline that it was provoked not by historical contingency or human merit, but solely by God’s sovereign grace.”* [Lincoln, 23]

**to be holy and blameless** — εἶναι ἡμᾶς ἁγίους καὶ ἀμώμους [einai hēmas hagiōus kai amōmous] This indicates *the temporal purpose of our election*. Holy = has the basic sense of being separated and may refer to impersonal things as nations (Exod 19:6)

and things (Exod 29:31). “A nation that is holy is to be different from other nations, a place that is holy such as the tabernacle or temple is different from other places, God who is holy is different from other gods, and so people who are holy are to be different from other people. **Since God has selected the believer to be his possession, the believer should reflect God’s character. Both in the OT and NT (Lev 11:44; 1 Pet 1:16) the believer is enjoined to be holy because God is holy. God did not choose anyone because they were holy but he chose them in order that they might be holy.**” [Hoehner, 178f] Blameless = the negative of the word “blame, defect, blemish” and therefore “one without reproach or blameless.” It was used in the OT to denote the sacrifice that had no blemish. The elect are therefore chosen “to be set apart, dedicated for His use and above reproach, blameless.”

**SANCTIFICATION, JUSTIFICATION OR GLORIFICATION?** — Good Bible students differ as to what exactly Paul is referring when he says God chose us to be “holy and blameless” — was Paul speaking of our **sanctification** (our life and walk here on earth) or was he speaking of our **justification** (the fact that the Lord sees us as blameless even while on earth due to the saving work of Christ) or was he speaking of our **glorification** (that one day we will be in heaven, perfect, sinless, conformed to the image of His Son)? Charles Hodge believes Paul is speaking of our present sanctification while Harold Hoehner believes it refers to our life in heaven: “Does this refer to the earthly life of the believer or to the future when the believer stands in his presence? The latter is preferred.” [Hoehner, 179] I do not know exactly which was in Paul’s mind when he wrote but I know the statement could apply to all three situations. Regardless of how we apply this, it is important to remember the following: **“If election is to holiness as the apostle here teaches, it follows, first, that individuals, and not communities or nations, are the objects of election; secondly, that holiness in no form can be the ground of election. If men are chosen to be holy, they cannot be chosen because they are holy. And, thirdly, it follows that holiness is the only evidence of election. For one who lives in sin to claim to be elected unto holiness, is a contradiction.”** [Hodge, 35]

**before Him** — **κατενώπιον αὐτοῦ** [katenōpion autou] before Him, in the presence of Him = “This enhances the middle voice of ἐξελέξατο [exelexato, “chosen, elected”], which substantiates that **God chose the believers for his benefit, namely, to be holy and blameless before him.**

**in love** — **ἐν ἀγάπῃ** [en agapē] There are 3 views as to how this phrase is used:

- some commentators believe it qualifies “he chose” in v. 4, the sense being that God’s election was not a random choice but rather one in which God had great interests in the objects of His choice. This view is not accepted by most commentators today because (a) if Paul wanted to express God elected in love, he would not have had the word separated as it is in this verse; (b) election itself contains elements of the love of God without having to be additionally expressed; and (c) most of the occurrences of the word “love” in Ephesians refers to the believer’s love and not God’s love.
- some commentators (Chrysostom, Jerome, Hendriksen, Best, et. al.) and translations (Peshitta, RSV, NASB, TEV, NIV) joins “in love” with “predestine” in v. 5, the sense being that God’s act of predestination was born in love. Proponents of this view says it is awkward to have “in love” qualify “holy and without blame”, and the passage focuses on the gracious acts of God and not the believer’s actions. Hoehner argues against this view however, explaining (a) whether the phrase is more awkward if it qualifies “holy and without blame” or “predestine” is a matter of opinion; (b) there are similar examples of such usage (although next exact) elsewhere in the NT; (c) to add “in love” to “predestinate” is unnecessary since predestination itself is a demonstration of God’s love; and (d) to have “in love” qualify “predestinate” seems to make vv. 5b-6 redundant.
- some commentators (Calvin, Hodge, Moule, Lightfoot, Wescott, Lenski, Bruce, Lincoln, O’Brien, Hoehner) and translations (Vulgate, AV, RV, ASV, NEB, JB, NJB, NRSV) unites “in love” with “holy and without blame.” Hoehner argues this as follows: (a) in the present context the verbs / participles always precedes the qualifying phrase; e.g., “the one who blessed us ... with every spiritual blessing” – v. 3, “he chose us ... in him before the foundation of the world” – v. 4, “having predestined us ... to adoption” – v. 5, “he bestowed grace on us ... in the beloved” – v. 6, “we have redemption ... through his blood” – v. 7, “he lavished on us ... with all wisdom and insight” – v. 8, “having made known the mystery ... according to his good pleasure” – v. 9, “he purposed ... in him” – v. 9, “to head up all things ... in Christ” – v. 10, “having been predestined ... according to his purpose” – v. 11. There are two exceptions in vv. 6, 8 but the bulk of the evidence supports “in love” modifying “holy and without blame.” (b) four out of five times Paul uses “in love” in Ephesians the phrase follows the clause it modifies, (c) the other four times “in love” is used in Ephesians it speaks of human love and not God’s love, and (d) it is fitting to have love united with holy and without blame to provide balance.

These opinions may be seen in the verses placed above from the different versions: the KJV unites “in love” with “holy and without blame;” the NIV unites “in love” with “predestine” and Young’s Literal Translation is about as neutral as one can be!

**“Hence, in this passage holiness and blamelessness are affected by love. To have love without righteousness is to have love without a standard of right and wrong, and to have righteousness without love lacks warmth and personal interest. In reality, both work in harmony because love is the essence of all virtue for it fulfills the whole law. God has restored what humans lost in the fall. He is both love and holy and a person is to manifest love with holiness as a result of being elected. This will be fully realized in the future when believers will stand in God’s presence. However, if it is true that they will be holy and blameless before him in love, the purpose of God’s work in believers today is to produce holiness within them and love toward one another. That which will be perfected in the future has its necessary corollary today. Believers are to be holy and blameless before him in love, as well as before their fellow human beings in order to show God’s work and character in them.”**

[Hoehner, 184f] “The preposition is best understood as having ‘comitative’ force: the purpose of God is that his people should be marked by holiness and blamelessness, coupled with love....So NEB: ‘he chose us ... to be dedicated, to be without blemish in his

sight, to be full of love.” [Bruce, 256]

**V. 5 — having predestined us — προορίσας ἡμᾶς [proorisas hēmas]** προορίσας [proorisas] which comes from a compound word, the root word being ὁρίζω [horizō] from which we get our word “horizon.” The word means “to set a boundary, determine, separate” with the prefix meaning “before”. Predestine therefore means “to determine beforehand, mark out beforehand.” The word is rarely used in classical Greek and not in the LXX at all. It is only used 6x in the NT (Acts 4:28; Rom 8:29, 30; 1 Cor 2:7; Eph 1:5, 11). What is interesting is that twice it is “things” which are predestined (Acts 4:28; 1 Cor 1:27) but when the other four times it refers to people, it always has two objects (two accusatives), **God has predestined us to something.** “[Hermann] Cremer notes that the primary interest is not the who but to what is one predestined. Although the action of the verb precedes history, the who belongs to history and the what talks about the eternal future. In conclusion, it means that one’s destiny is determined beforehand.” [Hoehner, 193]

**PREDESTINATION IS NOT EQUIVALENT TO ELECTION —** It should be noted that even though election and predestination are involved with one another, they are distinct. It is difficult to fine-tune the distinctions in some of these definitions but Paul here could be saying “God chose by predestinating” or that “because we were predestined, God chose us.”

**to adoption as sons — εἰς υἰοθεσίαν [eis huithesian]** “to sonship, to adoption” denotes **to what the believer has been predestined.** The word υἰοθεσίαν [huithesian] is used 5x in NT, only by Paul (Rom 8:15, 23; 9:4; Gal 4:5; Eph 1:5). The basic meaning of the word has not changed radically through the years although the legal implications is different from culture to culture.

- **Jewish culture** — there was no legal custom in Judaism for adoption, the closest thing to it is the levirate marriage whereby if a man dies childless, his brother was to marry the widow for an heir to the estate (Deut 25:5-10). Also, while the Greek word is not found in the LXX, there was the concept that every firstborn Israelite belonged to God (Num 3:11-13) and the nation of Israel was considered the firstborn of God with God as their Father (Ex 4:22; Jer 31:9). But on the whole, the institution of adoption of individuals into a family if not portrayed in the OT.
- **Greek culture** — the Greeks did have adoption where a man may adopt a male citizen to receive both the legal and religious privileges and responsibilities of a real son. The problem with this is it would be unlikely that those in the first century AD would be following Greek laws when the Romans had overtaken the Greek territory more than a century ago. Therefore it is unlikely Paul had this in mind when he used the word.
- **Roman culture** — According to many Bible students, this is the most reasonable alternative because the people he was addressing were under Roman rule; Paul was born a Roman citizen, which he prized (Acts 22:28); and the practice of adoption was carried out by the Caesars for succession of power and would have been common knowledge for those under Rome’s rule.

The following is an extended quote from Hoehner concerning the implications of adoption: “In order to understand adoption one must understand the structure of the Roman family. The father had absolute power (*patria potestas*) over the members of his family so that he could even take the life of a member of his family and that act would not be considered murder. With regard to property, he had full legal ownership of everything the family had and could dispose of it as he willed.... Under Roman law the procedure of adoption had two steps. In the first step, the son had to be released from the control of his natural father.... Regarding the second step, since the natural father no longer had any authority over him, the adopter became the new father with absolute control over him, and he retained this control until the adoptee died or the adopter freed him. The son was not responsible to his natural father but only to his newly acquired father. The purpose of this adoption was so that the adoptee could take the position of a natural son in order to continue the family line and maintain property ownership. This son became the *patria potesta* in the next generation.

***“The saints chosen by God are predestined as adopted sons (and daughters) of God. This means that believers, formerly labeled as ‘sons of disobedience’ and ‘children of wrath’ (Eph 2:2-3), have absolutely no responsibility and / or obligation to their old father the devil (cf. John 8:38, 44), the ruler of the realm of the air (Eph 2:2). Rather, they are now God’s sons and daughters and he controls their lives and property. Since God does not die, the saints will always be under his control. The father has a right to discipline his sons (Heb 12:5-11). Although this may sound foreboding, it is not. It must be remembered that under Roman law the reason for adoption was to continue a family name and its property. The point is that the one adopted acquired a new status, privilege, and property that would not have been available under his old father. There would be no reason for adoption if it were disadvantageous. The adoption brought great gains to the adoptee.***

***“Likewise, the saints were under the tyrant the devil who was their slavemaster and who brought destruction. In contrast, the saints have a new father who is unselfish, loving, and caring and wants the very best for his sons and daughters, the believers. Although believers are adopted into God’s family, its full realization for the believers will be enjoyed at the time of their resurrection (Rom 8:23) when their old father the devil will no longer tempt them to return to him.”*** [Hoehner, 195ff]

Ernest Best [125] notes there are also differences between the Roman adoption scenario and the scriptures. In the Roman world, the father adopted a son did so out of his own need, wishing either to continue his family or to provide himself with an heir. He is concerned with his own interests. ***God’s adoption of sinners is completely by grace, being based on love. The father would often adopt those from his own social strata, while God lifts sinners out of their sin.***

**ADOPTION OCCURS IN TIME —** “When does adoption take place? It is not like election and foreordination. We were



foreordained to adoption; when the time comes we get it. We are all children of God by faith, but as John expresses it, ‘As many as received him, to them gave he power to become sons of God, even as many as believed on him.’ ***So our adoption takes place at the time when we believe, and when we receive Christ as our Savior.*** Foreordination took place way back yonder in eternity, but the fruitage, the adoption, takes place in time. How is this adoption signified to us? How am I to tell when I am adopted? Whenever in the heart of a believer there comes a filial feeling toward God, ‘He hath sent forth the spirit of adoption whereby we cry Abba, Father.’ I remember distinctly when that filial feeling came into my own heart. ***Before I was converted I thought of God as distant, dreadful, unapproachable, and did not like to think about him. But when I believed on Jesus Christ and the spirit of adoption came into my heart, I could not say often enough, ‘Father! Father! Father!’ I would wake in the night and say it.***” [Carroll, 78]

**through Jesus Christ** — διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ [dia Iēsou Christou] This shows through whom the adoption is, Jesus Christ is the agency of the believer’s adoption. “It is through or by means of the work of Christ discussed in the following verses that makes it possible for the sinner to be adopted into the family of God.” [Hoehner, 197]

**to himself** — εἰς αὐτόν [eis auton] is taken by some to refer to Christ but it more likely refers to God the Father: (a) the whole context is praise to God the Father, God is the subject of v. 4 who chose “us”, and in v. 5-6 predestination is according to the will of the Father; (b) what follows these words, “according to the good pleasure of His will,” reads more smoothly if “to himself” refers to God the Father and not Christ; and (c) Paul’s use of prepositions in this section implies the reference is to God the Father. ***“Therefore, God predestined us to be adopted as his sons (and daughters), this adoption came through Christ, and this finally brings us to God in order to have fellowship with him as our father.***” [Hoehner, 198] ***“The redemption, which originated with God, has his own glorification as its end. The predestination, which is the product of God’s grace, resounds to the praise of the glory of that grace.”*** [Lincoln, 26]

**according to the good pleasure of his will** — κατὰ τὴν εὐδοκίαν τοῦ θελήματος αὐτοῦ [kata tēn eudokian tou thelēmatos autou] This gives the standard by which God’s actions were accomplished. εὐδοκίαν [eudokian] “good pleasure” occurs 9x in the NT and has the following connotations: (a) it can describe purpose, will, desire; (b) it can denote goodwill or benevolence; or (c) it can mean good pleasure, satisfaction, well-pleasing. It is used here in the third sense: ***“God’s predestination of adopted sons into his family was not unpleasant but rather expresses his good pleasure. Barth summarizes it well when he says, ‘Not a grim Lord watching over the execution of his predetermined plan, but a smiling Father is praised. He enjoys imparting his riches to many children.’”*** [Hoehner, 198f] ***“Pleasure, which is used of the passionate concern of Paul’s heart (Rom 10:1) and the generous motives that prompted Christians in Rome to proclaim Christ (Phil 1:15), signifies not simply the purpose of God but also the delight that he takes in his plans. It has warm and personal connotations, and draws attention to God’s willingness and joy to do good.”*** [O’Brien, 103]

θελήματος [thelēmatos] “will, desire.” “God’s good pleasure comes from his will.... In the NT when [“good pleasure”] is used of God it speaks of God’s sovereignty. ***In the context of Eph 1:5 and 9, God’s good pleasure is expressed freely from his own will, which is not influenced by any other person or thing.***” [Hoehner, 199]

**v. 6** — “This marks the end of the first strophe of praise revolving around the first person of the Trinity, God the Father. Having discussed the activity and cause of the Father’s election, Paul shows the goal, that is, the praise of the glory of his grace.” [Hoehner, 199]

**to the praise of the glory of his grace** — εἰς ἔπαινον δόξης τῆς χάριτος αὐτοῦ [eis epainon dozēs tēs charitos autou] ἔπαινος [epainos] = “praise, approval, applause.” It is used 11x in NT. In this context it is the praise of God by the believers.

**glory** = δόξα [doxa] has changed in its usage. In classical Greek it had the idea of “(my) opinion” or “reputation (the opinion of others)”. The word occurs 276x in the LXX and translated from 25 different words, around 180x from a single word meaning “weighty” in a person, therefore “significant, importance.” This personal “weightiness” makes an impact on others. The word is used 166x in the NT, following the LXX usage of “reputation, power” and further expresses the “divine mode of being” referring to divine honor, splendor, power, and radiance. ***“Basically, [glory] has the idea of the reflection of the essence of one’s being, the summation of all of one’s attributes, whether it refers to God or a human being. The essence of one’s being makes an impact, whether good or bad, on others; this impact of one’s essential being is that of one’s reputation or glory. Because of how God has revealed himself, one thinks of his reputation in categories of splendor, power, and radiance. That reputation is a result of his essential being. Therefore, a human being is to glorify (in the sense of magnify or praise) God because of his glory, reflecting his essential being.”*** [Hoehner, 200]

**PRAISE TO GOD’S ESSENTIAL BEING, HIS GLORY** — This phrase could be understood in several different manners, all of which are allowable in the Greek language. It could be rendered “for the glorious praise of his grace” but this seems to miss the point. This places the emphasis upon the “glorious praise” of man for the grace of God, directly opposite the trend of the passage. Furthermore, this phrase is paralleled two other times in this section (v. 6, 12 and 14, minus the words “of his grace”) and this rendering would make absolutely no sense without the words “of his grace” (missing in the other two parallel phrases). The other two renderings are equally supported by good expositors. One rendering is “to the praise of his glorious grace” (RSV, NIV, NRSV) or “to the praise of God’s essential being’s grace.” Hoehner disagrees however, stating Paul is not talking about the praise of God’s grace but the praise of God’s glory for his grace. Also, the commentators that take this view are inconsistent in their translation of vv. 12 and 14. The other rendering is “to the praise of the glory of his grace” (AV, ASV, NASB, JB, NJB). Hoehner supports this translation because it meets the demands of the context and makes for a consistent translation in vv. 12 and

14. He states it also reflects a Hebraic influence “denoting a particular quality of someone or something.” *“Therefore, it is praise to God’s essential being, his glory, for his graciousness as seen in his acts of electing and predestinating. God’s essential being is the summation of all his attributes. Its manifestation is God’s gracious actions of the election and predestination whereby he adopted sons according to the good pleasure of his will. This is why the believer is to praise his glory or his essential being.”* [Hoehner, 202]

**“WITH WHICH GRACE HE HAS GRACED US”** — Grace here is used as a transition with a play on words: “with which [grace (charis) being the antecedent] he has bestowed [echaritosen] on us.” *The sense is that the believer is visited with grace. He has been ingratiated with grace* (Peshitta, Vulgate, RSV, NASB, NEB, NIV). This makes grace something **objective**. There are those who makes this grace a **subjective** endowment, the sense being that the believer is infused with grace so that one is made gracious and is favorably accepted by God (AV). Chrysostom illustrated it as saying it is like taking a poor, old, ill clad, famished leper and turning him into a rich, healthy, well attired, satiated youth. Since believers are internally changed, they are now acceptable to God. This is foreign to the scriptures however and the majority of the commentators takes this in the first, objective sense. This is the sense in which it is used in the only other place in the NT, the story of Mary with Gabriel (Luke 1:28). There it is said God bestowed favor upon Mary for choosing her as our Lord’s earthly mother. This is further supported in vv. 29, 30 where Gabriel says not to fear God’s grace in choosing her, which would be strange if she was infused with grace. The context emphasizes God’s choice of Mary rather than Mary’s acceptability. “Therefore, the *believers are acceptable to God not because he has infused grace in them, but because God has bestowed grace on them.*” [Hoehner, 203]

**in the beloved One** — ἐν τῷ ἠγαπημένῳ [en tō ēgapēmenō] The Father calls the Son “beloved” at His baptism (Matt 3:17 || Mark 1:11 || Luke 3:22), at the transfiguration (Matt 17:5 || Mark 9:7 || Luke 9:35; 2 Pet 1:17), and is implied in the parable of the wicked husbandman (Mark 12:6 || Luke 20:13). “The expression ‘in the Beloved’ continues the notion that all of God’s blessings come to us ‘in Christ’ (vv. 3, 4; cf. 5). ‘Beloved’ marks out Christ as the supreme object of the Father’s love; at Colossians 1:13 he is called ‘the Son of his love.’ This designation may have been a messianic title among Jews of the first century A.D., although there is no certain evidence for this pre-Christian usage [note Lincoln also points out that hard evidence is not presented to support such a declaration]. It became a messianic title among early Christians, having been used in the Old Testament of Israel as God’s beloved people (Deut 33:12; Isa 5:1, 7; Jer 11:15; 12:7). At his baptism and transfiguration Jesus is named by the Father as his ‘beloved Son’ (Mark 1:11; 9:7 and parallels; cf. 12:6; Luke 20:13). Elsewhere in Paul’s letters this description of Israel as ‘the beloved’ is applied to believers in the context of their election (1 Thess 1:4; 2 Thess 2:13; Rom 9:25; Col 3:12): they have been chosen in Christ the Beloved, and are dearly loved by God. *The term ‘Beloved’ here in v. 6 shows that God’s election of believers to be his sons and daughters is intimately related to their being in Christ the Chosen One (cf. v. 5), and that the bounty which he lavishes on them ‘consists in their being caught up into the love which subsists between the Father and the Son’* (cf. John 3:35; 5:20; 17:23, 26).” [O’Brien, 104f]

**SUMMATION** — “Believers are to bless God who has benefitted them with every spiritual blessing. The first is the work of God the Father who has elected them in Christ in eternity before the creation of the world that they might be holy before him. He elected them from the mass of all humanity because he had already predetermined their destiny as adopted sons into God’s family, all in accordance with God’s good pleasure. The goal of all this was to cause believers to praise the glorious father for his grace which he has bestowed on them in his beloved Son Christ. This reference to Christ furnishes a transition to the second person of the Trinity discussed in verses 7-12.” [Hoehner, 204]

**WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?** — *Paul, an authorized messenger of Jesus Christ dispatched through the will of God, one of the select few chosen for life to bear testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ with authority over doctrine and the churches, to those in the Ephesian area, set-apart and dedicated to the Lord, the believing ones in Christ Jesus. Grace and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

*We bless, we eulogize, we praise the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who has conferred every benefit having its source in the Holy Spirit that we would ever need upon us in the supernatural realm of God, His complete domain, the full extend of His divine operation. The manner in which God blesses believers is through the Triune Godhead: the election of God the Father, the redemption of God the Son, and the sealing of God the Holy Spirit. God the Father chose us, picked us individually out for Himself from the mass of fallen mankind, in connection with or through Christ’s work of redemption before the foundations of the universe were ever thrown down, that we would be set-apart and dedicated for His use, without reproach and blameless, filled with love for the Lord and for others for His sake. God the Father determined beforehand, marked out beforehand, separated us beforehand to be adopted and placed as children in His family through or by means of the work of Jesus Christ to Himself [God the Father], according to that which seemed good in His heart’s desire, that which gave Him pleasure, resulting in praise and approval of God’s essential being, His glory, the summation of all His attributes, for His gracious actions of election and predestinating us to adoption in Christ Jesus.”*