

Divine Sovereignty-Ephesians

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[0 : 00] And we're in chapter 1 of Ephesians, and we'll be looking at verses 1 through 14.

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, to the saints who are at Ephesus and who are faithful in Christ Jesus.

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 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.

Just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him.

In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.

[1 : 35] In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace, which He lavished on us.

In all wisdom and insight, He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention, which He purposed in Him, with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times.

That is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth.

In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose, who works all things after the counsel of His will, to the end, to the end, that we, who were the first to hope in Christ, would be to the praise of His glory.

In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation, having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory.

[3 : 43] Thank you. And if you would keep your place where you are right there in Ephesians, we will be returning there shortly. I do want to give you just a brief update as to what's coming in the very near future, because today, my intention is to conclude the subject that we have been dealing with for the past several weeks on the sovereignty of God and the responsibility of man.

I realize that there is far, far more about this that could be said, but I trust that our treatment of it has been adequate so as to demonstrate, I think, scripturally, that God is sovereign and man is nonetheless responsible.

But next Sunday will be Thanksgiving Sunday, the Thanksgiving before, Sunday before Thanksgiving, and we traditionally have the Lord's Supper at that time and we will, Lord willing, this one week from today.

And then two weeks from today, it will not be a message so much on sovereignty and responsibility, but I do want to include as part of that series our treatment on universal redemption versus universal salvation.

and we need to, once again, consider a number of texts that state quite clearly that Christ died for the sins of the whole world and that in the death of Christ, the whole world is reconciled to God.

[5 : 16] If that's the case, then why is it necessary for anybody to be saved and why isn't everybody saved if Christ died for everybody? Then are not the benefits of his death applied to every individual for whom he died?

And this is, this is a difficult issue, but it is a very important issue. And we will try to thresh that out with numerous passages of Scripture, I think all of them from the New Testament, but I trust that it will be enlightening and helpful to you.

So, that will be coming then a week from next Sunday, but next Sunday we will devote virtually all of our time to the Lord's table and to the implications of that as believers today.

We have been relating to the issue of human responsibility and our need to respond to what God has provided in Christ.

And at the very outset, we told you that the Calvinist position is such that they believe that God selects or elects individuals completely apart from anything that they have done or can do, and that for reasons known only to himself, God has picked certain individuals for salvation, and he has deliberately excluded other individuals.

[6 : 48] So, there are some who are destined for heaven because they are the elect of God, and there are others who are targeted for perdition because they are not elect, and it doesn't make any difference what either group does.

That's the way it is. And this position is taken, I'm sure, with very good intention and very honorable designs in that they are attempting to elevate the sovereignty of God.

They are trying to establish a case for the absolute, utter, complete, entire sovereignty of God over everything. And even when it comes to your salvation, if you think you had a choice in the matter because you purposely used your volition and you believed on Christ and that's why you were saved, our Calvinist friends would say, no, that is not why you were saved.

You were saved because you were elect and you believed because God enabled you to believe, otherwise you couldn't have believed, so even your believing is something God did for you.

So it is all of God, nothing of man. That's the classic Calvinist position. And it is still to this day embraced by significant dignitaries in the evangelical world whose names I will not mention.

[8 : 15] I've dropped some of them in the past, but there are a number of very responsible, capable Bible teachers, at least I would say capable in other areas, who believe these things.

And I believe these things myself at one time, and I just no longer can support the position. One of the passages that they use, of course, has to do with what we've already considered in Romans 9, Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated.

And I think we pointed out to you that the passage in Romans 9, 10, and 11 isn't talking about the individuals Jacob and Esau at all. It is talking about their seed.

And that's made quite clear in Genesis when God tells Rachel that two nations are in your womb.

not just two individuals. It's true, two individuals were, Jacob and Esau. But God made it quite clear to Rachel that Jacob and Esau are going to be two nations.

[9 : 22] They are going to constitute two nations. And the one nation, of course, is Israel, all of the descendants of Jacob, his 12 sons, etc. And Esau, Esau, his brother, will not be an Israelite.

Now, this is real news to some people because they just automatically think that two sons born of the same woman as twins, if one of them is going to be a Jew, an Israelite, well, the other has to be.

No, he doesn't. And he isn't. He is not an Israelite. He does not belong to the seed of Israel. He is an Edomite. And the Edomites are going to give the Israelites fits from the time they come out of the nation of Egypt heading home for the promised land.

There's going to be perpetual conflict. Who are these people today? Today, their descendants are in Jordan, Transjordan, where the ancient Moabites lived, and in southern Jordan, where the Nabataeans were, and where Petra is, the city of Petra, down in the south.

So, essentially, the Edomites constitute an age-old enemy of Israel. And yet, they began not only as brothers, but as twin brothers, Jacob and Esau.

[10 : 54] And the scripture text in Genesis 25 says that the elder will serve the younger. And which one is the elder?

Well, we know the elder was Esau. He was born first. And by ordinary customary rights, he would have been considered the one endowed with all of the responsibilities, perks, and privileges of the firstborn.

But God passed over him. And the reason he did is because God knew the character of this man Esau. And he knew that when the time came, he would despise his birthright.

That's exactly what he did. And when God said that the elder shall serve the younger, you can't look and find any time in Genesis when the elder, Esau, served the younger, Jacob.

In fact, we won't go there, and I don't want to spend much time here, but when Jacob had been down with his, with Rachel and Leah's father, Laban, Uncle Laban, and laboring for seven years for Rachel and then seven more years for Laban and vice versa, he was going to return home and he was leaving Laban, he was going back home to the land of Canaan, and he knew from having sent a scout on ahead that Esau, his brother who had vowed to kill him years ago, was en route to meet him, and he was coming with 400 horsemen armed, and Jacob is thinking, uh-oh, it's revenge time, he said he would kill me and this is going to be his opportunity, so in a panic,

[12 : 54] Jacob says, listen, he turned to his entourage, which was his wives, their concubines, and all of their children, and he said, I want you to break up in different companies, and if the first company is attacked, then the second can hopefully escape, because he was expecting armed conflict, and he had them all arrayed that way, he put those whom he loved the most in the rear, protecting them, and he expected Esau to come in with his henchmen, guns a-blazing, well, they didn't exactly have guns, but you know what I mean, and of course, it wasn't like that at all, but here, the point I want to make is this, is that Esau had the ascendancy over Jacob as individuals in every encounter, Jacob never was top dog in that situation, he was always the underdog, and it was always Esau who was in the position of power, and Jacob who was at his mercy, so it completely is opposite of what the prediction was that God said that the elder shall serve the younger, but he never did, he never did as an individual, because God wasn't talking about individuals, he was talking about nations, descendants from those two boys,

Jacob and Esau, and he's saying the elder shall serve the younger, that means the elder nation will serve the younger, that is, the Edomites will serve the Israelites, and if you know anything about the 67 war, or the 73 war of Yom Kippur, you know who it was that was decimated by the Israelis, who supposedly didn't stand a prayer, but they came out victorious, and it was the Edomites who were decimated, and actually will be, I think, further on in the tribulation material, but that's another subject, so here in Ephesians, we are just looking briefly at what Paul has to say about the subject of election, and in the chapter that was read, the first 14 verses, I just want to point out a few things to you as we go down through these verses, and if you will look at them, you will see that the whole key for this principle of election is in the person of

Christ Jesus, and let me just say this up front, everyone who is in Christ is elect, that is chosen by God in Christ, but that's the key, in Christ, and what I mean by that is this, one of the names that means Christ, Christos in the Greek, the word Christos, which we translate in the English as Christ, literally means Messiah, Mashiach in the Hebrew, and the word Messiah and the word Christ have other synonyms that mean exactly the same thing, and one of them is the anointed one, that's what the Messiah means, Jesus is the anointed one, who anointed him, his father anointed him, his father chose him, the father sent the son to be the savior of the world, so he is the anointed one, he is the appointed one, he is the chosen one, he is the elect one, out of all whom God could have chosen and used to accomplish our redemption, he chose his son, he elected him, and if you are in Christ as a believer in him, you are elect as

Christ is elect, that's where your election comes from, that's what makes us elect, is being in him, and we share in his election, you get virtually no argument from people at all, even those of the Calvinist persuasion, when you say, do you believe that positionally speaking, when Jesus Christ was crucified, you were crucified with him, I realize this is a hard concept to grasp, but spiritually speaking and positionally speaking, it's true, the old Negro spiritual, were you there when they crucified my Lord, is nothing but another way of asking, are you a believer in Jesus Christ?

Because if you were there, and people say, what do you mean if I was there? How could I be there? That was 2,000 years ago, what are you talking about? No, no, no, no, positionally in the mind of God, if you are in Christ, then God regards you as having been on that cross with him, dying with him, suffering with him, paying the penalty with him, so that all he accomplished on that cross is what you accomplished, and you say, oh, that's crazy, I wasn't there, I didn't know anything, we're talking about God's perspective, this is called positional truth, this is what it means, to be in Christ, and if you are a believer in Christ, you are not only crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ lives in me, Paul says, but you were buried with Christ, his burial becomes your burial, and his resurrection becomes your resurrection, and his ascension becomes your ascension, and his being seated with the

[19:04] Father becomes your being seated, seated with him in heavenly places, as far as we're concerned, we're seated right here in the auditorium of Grace Bible Church, that's your body, but as far as God is concerned, and positionally, you are seated in the heavenly places with Christ, it's a done deal, as God views it, the perspective is his, and it's all wrapped up, we are living in time and space, and we see ourselves right here, but we need to see ourselves as God sees us, and when you take that into consideration, look at Ephesians 1, and the end of verse 1, the faithful in Christ Jesus, we are not merely the faithful of Christ Jesus, we are the faithful in Christ, bone of his bone, flesh of his flesh, spiritually, now spiritually, there are no bones, and there is no flesh, that's physical, but spiritually, again, is from God's perspective, believers are referred to as being the spiritual body of Christ, and stop and think about that, it sounds almost like a contradiction in terms, because the minute we use the word body, we cannot divorce from our thinking the idea of the physical, we all know what a physical body is like, it's very much with us, but what in the world is a spiritual body, it sounds like an oxymoron, a spiritual body, the analogy is used whereby we are members of his body, members of

Christ's body in particular, spiritual members of his body, and I'm convinced that the reason the Spirit of God uses that term, spiritual body, is because it was the only thing that could be used that demonstrates the cohesiveness, the togetherness, the interconnection, like every part of your body is really a part of your body, and there isn't any part of your body you want to do without.

All of your body parts go together to make the whole, and you're very much attached to all of them. A body speaks of unanimity, oneness, wholeness, togetherness, that's what a body is.

It's made up of several parts, all kinds of parts, and organs, and bones, and vessels, and just a huge array conglomerate of all kinds of material things go together to make these bodies, and every one of them has a place in the body, and fits, and belongs, and serves.

So just transfer that, if you will, to the concept of the immaterial, and that's the way Paul is using it. He uses the physical body as a kind of like a launching pad to illustrate the cohesiveness and the corporate nature of being in Christ as a member of his body.

[22 : 30] Another analogy he uses, also in Ephesians, is that of a building. He talks about a building. And Peter as well talks about stones in the building.

And we think in terms of the building as complete and entire, but it's made up of individual parts, individual stones. And we are referred to as living stones in the building, so that each believer is like a member or has a part of the spiritual body, and each believer is like a brick or a stone in a building that God is building, and when the building is finished, and it's capped off, that's the fullness of the Gentiles.

When it has come in, the building's done, then God removes the building. That's called the rapture, the translation of the church, and it all has to do with being in Christ.

So, if you are in Christ, you cannot be more in Christ, or less in Christ, and you are not more in Christ than somebody else who is in Christ.

We are all equal members in that body, and when Paul uses the phrase, look at verse 1, the faithful in Christ Jesus, and at the end of verse 3, in Christ and in verse 7, in Him, Christ, we have redemption.

[24 : 00] In verse 9, it ends with in Him. In verse 10, it is in Christ, things in the heavens and things upon the earth. In Him, we also have obtained an inheritance.

In verse 12, in Christ. You almost get the impression that this is all about Him, don't you? Could it be any clearer? It has been said, Christianity is Christ.

That's what it is. And if you are in Christ, you share in Christ's everything. You are joint heirs, you are heirs of God, and joint heirs with Jesus Christ.

So, whatever He possesses, you possess. God is. And if you respond with, oh man, I don't deserve any of that. Well, of course not. That's a given.

God isn't providing any of these things because we deserve them. He's providing them because He is a gracious God. God is God. And when you put your faith and trust in Jesus Christ, many more we haven't talked about, accrue to your benefit and are put down in your name because all that is His is ours.

[25 : 23] That's what it means to be in Christ. It means to share in whatever He is and has about everything. You cannot get more intimate. You cannot be more involved.

You cannot be more included. You cannot be more connected than to be in Him. And as we turn the page here in Ephesians 1 and this whole epistle is just reeking with this, verse 13 starts out with, well, look at it, in Him.

And verse 13 ends with, in Him with the Holy Spirit promise. And it is just glorious. Look at verse 22, end of the chapter.

And He put all things in subjection under His feet. This is the Father, God the Father, put all things in subjection under Christ's feet, and gave Him, Christ, as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

And I cannot resist this going over to Ephesians chapter 5 because it is such a familiar passage and it relates to the subject of marriage. church. It's a beautiful thing.

[26 : 53] Paul talks about husbands and wives and their responsibility to each other. And then he comes down in verse 29 and says, for no one ever hated his own flesh but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does also the church, because we are members of His body.

And for this cause, a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. This mystery is great, but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church.

What's that all about? Oneness. Oneness. Oneness. What's marriage all about? Oneness. Oneness. The two shall become one flesh.

That's what marriage is more than anything. It's oneness, the two becoming one. And being in Christ is more about oneness than it is anything.

Being in union with Him. And when you put your faith and trust in Jesus Christ, the Spirit of God, in a way completely unbeknownst to you, the Spirit of God spiritually baptized you, caused you to be identified and entered into the body of Christ, and you became one with Him.

[28 : 24] You are fused into Christ. amalgamated into Christ, baptized into Christ, joined into Christ. It's the most glorious position any human being could ever have.

And it is all because of what Jesus Christ did on that cross. You didn't deserve one bit of it. That's called grace. Amazing.

Amazing grace. next week, next week, I have a video rendition of Amazing Grace that we shared with the folks here a few weeks ago in the Sunday school class, and I want you to have the full benefit of it next week.

It is just a marvelous, marvelous rendition, and it's a beautiful thing, and we'll share that with you right before we serve our communion. Now, I'm deliberately quitting a few minutes early.

We've, I think, at least touched on the subject sufficiently. How are we elect? You are in Christ, you are elect. You share in his election, you share in everything he is and everything he does.

[29 : 31] You share in his destiny, you share in his eternal life, and it's all on the basis of grace. So, as we bring this to a conclusion, thinking in terms of a new message next Sunday, and we'll interrupt this train of thought a little bit.

Have you questions or comments, agreements, objections? I don't care. And by the way, you understand, I am not a bit upset if people disagree with me about this.

It doesn't bother me in the least. I wish I could agree with you, but if I did, we'd both be wrong. But I'm not put out with anybody. Because I held this position, you know.

I held this position that I'm now denying for several years. My bad. Any thoughts or comments, anyone? After such a controversial, heavy subject as Calvinism, no question.

Okay, Roger in the back. I can always count on Roger. Roger is a farmer with fertile fields and a fertile mind. I think verse 13 in chapter 1 is the one that kind of sealed it for me that you have to believe of your own free will.

[30 : 54] And then you are sealed. You know, you have to believe that gospel. And I don't see how Calvinist stands on that one verse there.

Well, most of our Calvinist friends would agree and they would say it's true, you do have to believe. And if you are elect, you will because you don't have a choice.

You will believe because you are elect. And this is a wonderful, wonderful verse. Verse 13, it's terribly translated. It's terribly translated in the King James Version.

It translates in the King James and almost reads as if the sealing of the Spirit is something that happens subsequent to believing. And this has led many of our holiness friends into what they call the second blessing.

Salvation is the first blessing. Receiving the Holy Spirit is the second blessing. And you receive salvation by believing on the Lord Jesus Christ. But you receive the second blessing in the Holy Spirit and the baptism of the Holy Spirit by praying through and agonizing and beseeching God for the gift.

[32 : 05] And that's called the second blessing. And many of our holiness friends get that idea from the way that King James is translated. But the New American, as well as other translations, I think greatly improves the meaning of the text in the Greek.

And the New American reads, In him, that is Christ, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation, having also believed, you were sealed in him with the Holy Spirit of promise.

When were you sealed? When you believed. And it is something that happens immediately upon believing, as do 32 other things.

all at the same time, transpire when you put your faith and trust in Jesus Christ. Just like that. There are 33 things, blessings that became available, not only available, but realized in your life, even though you don't even know it.

God knows it. God's the one who's made them real to all believers. believers. And if you do not know what they are and what they mean, then you don't derive the benefit from them.

[33 : 29] And it is not deriving the benefit of these things that cause believers to have no peace, no joy, no assurance, no security.

Their lives are a mess, even though they are in Christ. Their lives are a mess because they have no idea what has been provided for them in Christ. You see, the Bible gives us God's perspective about these things.

And if you just go with your perspective, which is so limited, you're going to be tied up in knots within yourself all the time. Nothing's going to work. Everything's going to be messed up.

There are so many Christians living messed up lives, no joy, no fulfillment, no satisfaction, just a mess. It doesn't have to be, but they don't know what's been provided for them in Christ.

So you can't appropriate. What you don't know you have. Other comments or questions? Ron, up here in front. The mic is on its way.

[34 : 39] That verse 4 there doesn't say that he chose us before the foundations of the world. It says he chose us in him before the foundations.

Yeah, absolutely. Absolutely. It chose us in him. And that's the key. It is in him. Absolutely. Absolutely. Absolutely.