

Wednesday March 22nd
“Books and Bagels”
7:30 -11 AM
Loc. LB at the Bridge

Books and Bagels is a ministry of Capitol Commission volunteers showing love to you March 22, and again May 4 this spring! Stop by and ‘pick 3’- a breakfast food (bagel, donut, or other breakfast items); a drink (water, juice, other) and a Book (Books address life questions and issues). **God exacts His kindness and compassion upon you each new day! Our goal is that this would be a tangible expression of that!**

Ephesians 1:4–13 (ESV)

“Even as he **chose** us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love ⁵ he **predestined** us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, ⁶ to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has **blessed** us in the Beloved. ⁷ In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, ⁸ which he **lavished** upon us, in all wisdom and insight ⁹ **making known** to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he **set forth** in Christ ¹⁰ as a plan for the fullness of time, to **unite** all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. ¹¹ In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been **predestined** according to the purpose of him who **works** all things according to the counsel of his will, ¹² so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. ¹³ In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, **were sealed** with the promised Holy Spirit,”

Introduction:

The popular fictional story, the Wizard of Oz, takes you on a magical journey that comes back to reality when Dorothy peaks behind the Wizard’s curtain. There, seeing the real Wizard’s fake power, a sense of disappointment replaces the wonder that had captivated Dorothy. When you read Scripture, you are presented with true and deep revelation of God. But in contrast to fiction, as God is revealed, He does not disappoint. The truth leads you to questions that only God knows; secret things. Today’s passage pulls the curtain back on salvation. It leaves the reader with many questions answered and many not answered. It is something that God in His wisdom wanted each

believer to know. Why? I believe there is a security, a humility and awe that wraps around the soul of each believer as they take a strong look at the work of God before the foundation of the world.

It is always important to stand in the context of the recipient. This is proper Bible study process.

1. Paul is writing to people who made a choice to put their trust in Christ.

Paul clearly writes in the first verse "to the saints" and "faithful in Christ." He also emphasizes, "In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit," Notice the decision of those who are the recipients of this letter. "Having believed" is past tense. They have already heard the truth of the gospel. They have already made a decision to believe. It is very important to understand that the book of Ephesians is written to people that have already, in their minds, made a decision to choose Christ. Now they get the rest of the story, they get a glimpse of salvation from God's side. This is like moving from the street view of Google Maps to the state, and national view, but then drawing back further and further until the view moves to the very outside of the entire universe. It is a view from the throne of God.

The look back is to the very foundation of salvation. You could liken it to entering a tall skyscraper for the first time. You do not necessarily grasp the deep foundational underpinning of that building. You only grasp the wonder of it. But as you begin to understand the architectural design, the foundation becomes clear. So it is with being "in Christ."

The salvation of a man’s soul is such a grand achievement of God. It literally shatters the spiritual prison described as being "dead in sin," Eph 2:1 or "separated from God by sin," Rom 6:23. Man’s separation from God is like a chasm that man cannot in and of himself cross. It is a chasm that no religion, nor effort of man can bridge. It is only bridged by Christ. This reality is oblivious to man without God's written revelation to man.

The cost of this grand achievement of God is the incarnation of eternal God the Son, Jesus Christ. Jesus was truly God and truly man. Born of a virgin, He grew up and lived a full life, yet did not ever sin. More than that, He kept and fulfilled the demands of the Law of God. The law of God is such a demanding requirement that no one can ever keep it except God Himself. For the Law of God saves no one, it only points out how cursed and unholy a person is. The Law demanded a payment for sin, and Jesus Christ paid that payment. Jesus Christ, the only perfect, holy Son of God, was nailed to a tree elevated between heaven and earth, and there in purity and holiness God smeared the sin of the world upon His body, (1 Peter 2:24). "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us..." (Gal 3:13). God the Father poured out His wrath upon Him for three hours. There eternal God the

Son paid our eternal debt. This is the magnificent achievement of salvation, born from a plan on eternity past. Yet, the response to this work of Christ, which Ephesians 1:13; 2:8-9 presents as 'belief' or 'faith' would never be made without God the Father gifting the person the ability to awaken from spiritual death to see their deadness to see the gift of life in Christ. This brings us to Ephesians 1:4.

2. God the Father made a decision in eternity past.

There are 17 verbs that describe the action of God in Ephesians 1:4-13. On the other hand, there are four verbs that describe the action of the believer. To quote a local pastor, "When you look at this passage and try to understand your part and God's part, you did all the sinning and God did all the saving!"¹

"For He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world"

This is a humbling and precious thought. Before a believer was ever thought of or came into existence, God loved, cherished and planned to redeem. God chose in eternity past. Some want to say that God looked down through time and saw the decision a person would make and that is how he chose. In other words, God wanted to see if you chose Him before He chose you.

The word "He chose" however does not allow that interpretation. The Greek language is very specific. The verb tense and voice states that God made a decision of choice and that it was completed in eternity past. This choice was to redeem to Himself a chosen group of people. The word "predestined" is also a completed decision that means to set apart from the beginning. The text states that God set His love on us and chose us for himself ahead of time. Deuteronomy 29:29 tells us that the secret things belong to God. It is our responsibility to respond to these revealed things. One thing is for certain, without God's choosing no one would ever respond to the gift that God the Son provided, Rom 6:23. All of humanity was condemned by Adam's sin, Rom 5:12.

Why did God choose those He chose?

Scripture in both Old and New Testament point to God's reason; His love:

Deuteronomy 7:7-8 (ESV)

"It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the Lord set his love on you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples, but it is because the Lord loves you..."

1 Corinthians 1:26-30 (ESV)

"For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful,

not many were of noble birth. ²⁷ But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; ²⁸ God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, ²⁹ so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. ³⁰ And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption,"

Scripture clearly presents no special reason that God chose some above others. God did not choose because He saw some good thing in you. The Scripture is clear, *"there is none good, no not one,"* Rom 3:10. He did not choose because He saw some spiritual life that could be worked up, here again the Scripture says that all of us were "dead in sin," Eph 2:1. The reason, no man can boast in himself only the Lord.

So why doesn't God save everyone? This is a great question and here Scripture is silent. Here the answer lies in the mind of God. But the Word of God does present is the answer from another direction of thought. As a matter of fact, God weeps over the lost, and does not desire than any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

Luke 19:41-42 (ESV)

"And when he drew near and saw the city, he wept over it, ⁴² saying, "Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes."

2 Peter 3:9 (ESV)

"The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance."

It is clear from Scripture that no one who calls on the name of the Lord will ever be turned away from salvation.

Romans 10:13 (ESV)

"For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

So why did Paul write to these Christians in a hostile world and go to this depth in explaining their salvation?

- It kept them from boasting about it. It was all God and not of them.
- It kept them telling others about it. This was the command of God.
- It kept them secure in knowing that God would never forsake them.
- It helped them comprehend what actions were going to be taken against God's people.

¹ J.D. Greear, Love Incorruptible Sermon Series, Chosen, Feb. 6, 2017 www.summitrdu.com

Capitol Commission Bible Studies

Tuesday (21st of February) @ 7:30am – 8:00am, LOB 414
Monday (20th of February) @ 12:00pm – 1:00pm, LB 2nd Flr.
Monday (20th of February) @ 12 Noon – 12:45pm, Chapel



Did God Choose You or Did You Choose God?
March 13 – March 19, 2017

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