

EXERCISE

Law or Gospel?

Ephesians 1 and the doctrine of election (predestination)

Ephesians 1:3-14 ³“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. ⁴For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love ⁵he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will—⁶to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the one he loves. ⁷In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God’s grace ⁸that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding. ⁹And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, ¹⁰to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment—to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ.

¹¹In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, ¹²in order that we, who were the first to hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory. ¹³And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God’s possession.

1. Is this a LAW teaching or a GOSPEL teaching? Point to the repeated words that tell you it is one or the other.
2. When would you want to read this section of Scripture?
3. Once you have determined whether this is law or gospel, what questions should never be a part of the discussion about this doctrine?

- Ask these **guiding questions**:
 - What does this portion of the Bible tell me about **God**?
 - What does it tell me about **me**?
 - What does it tell me about **my actions toward God**?
 - What does it tell me about **my actions toward others**?
 - What does it tell me about **this world**?
 - What does it tell me about **the future**?

EXCERCISE

As you read the following section of Scripture, ask and answer the “guiding questions” listed above:

Selected portions of Ephesians 2, 4, 5, and 6:

As for you, you were dead in your transgression and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the rule of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of [God’s] wrath. But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works. . . So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking . . . Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body. In your anger do not sin: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold. He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work . . . Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouth . . . Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. . . But among you there must not be a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed. . . Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord . . . Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her . . . children obey your parents in the Lord. . . Therefore, put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground.