

Ephesians

Lesson Three Praise to God for His Blessings

1:1-2

Greeting and Introduction

1:1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God

- A. Paul's greeting declared him to be the author of this letter.
- B. He identified himself simply as an apostle of Jesus Christ.
- C. However, his apostleship was not by his own will or choosing; rather, it was by the will of God (cf. Acts 9:15-16; 22:14-21; 26:12-18; Gal. 1:11-12; 1 Cor. 9:1-6).
- D. Paul demonstrated great humility in his greeting to the Ephesians.

To the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus

- A. This epistle is addressed to those in Ephesus who were saints and faithful.
 - 1. These are not two separate groups.
 - 2. All saints are faithful and all the faithful are saints.
- B. The word "saint" signifies one who is holy, consecrated, sanctified or pure.
 - 1. This Greek word (*αγιος* - *hagios*) is found 231 times in the NT.
 - 2. It is translated as "saint" 62 times.
 - 3. Thus, Christians are called saints many more times than they are called Christians.
 - 4. Yet, the religious word has misused the word "saint" to refer to some kind of "super" Christian.
 - 5. All Christians are saints, for they have been sanctified (made holy) by the blood of Jesus (John 17:17; Acts 20:32; 26:18; 1 Cor. 1:2, 30; 6:11; Eph. 5:25-26; 2 Thes. 2:13; Heb. 2:11; 10:10, 14; 13:12). {Cf. Acts 9:13, 32, 41; 26:10; Rom. 1:7; 8:27; 12:13; 15:25; 1 Cor. 14:33; Eph. 2:19; Phil. 4:21; 1 Thes. 3:13; etc.}
- C. The faithful are those who are full of faith.
 - 1. This means that their faith is active – in obedience and service.
 - 2. Thus, they are trustful – trust in God enough to obey His will and hold to His promises.
 - 3. And, they are trustworthy – reliable in carrying out the commands of God and their duties as Christians.
- D. Physically, these saints were located at Ephesus; but, spiritually, they lived in Christ Jesus.
 - 1. This introduces a phrase and a thought that will be carried through the book of Ephesians.
 - 2. One purpose of this book is to show what it means to be "in Christ."

1:2 Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ

- A. Grace is God's favor, goodwill and loving-kindness bestowed upon man.
- B. Peace is tranquility and prosperity as a result of a lack of conflict or discord.

1. Both of these words were common forms of greeting {"Grace" – Greek and "Peace" – Hebrew}.
 2. However, there is a spiritual lesson in this greeting.
 3. There can be no peace without grace.
 4. God's grace allows man to be forgiven of sin, resulting in a freedom from conflict – with God and within himself.
- C. God is the source (1 Pet. 5:10; Heb. 13:20) and Jesus is the distributor (John 1:17; Eph. 2:14) of grace and peace.

1:3-6
Praise to God

1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ

- A. The Greek word for "blessed" comes from *eulogeo*, from which we get the word "eulogy."
1. It means, "To speak well of; to praise, bless, or thank."
 2. Thus, for man to bless God, he must give Him the honor, praise and thanksgiving due to His name.
 3. To bless a meal means to give thanks to God for it (cf. Matt. 14:19; 26:26; Luke 22:19; 1 Tim. 4:4-5).
 4. When God blesses man, the same word is used but in a different sense.
 5. God bestows goodness and kindness upon man as an expression of love from a Father to His children.
 6. Men are to practice this kind of blessing upon their enemies (Matt. 5:44; Luke 6:28; Rom. 12:14; 1 Cor. 4:12).
- B. God is worthy of man's honor and praise simply because of who He is – the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ

- A. Yet, there are more reasons to praise the Almighty God.
- B. He deserves praise because of the blessing He has bestowed upon the saints.
- C. In fact, He has blessed the Christian with all spiritual blessings!
1. Those who have become Christians have entered into a realm (sphere or kingdom) of all spiritual blessings.
 2. These are spiritual blessings – not physical, intellectual, social, etc.
 3. God is concerned primarily with the spiritual man – the inner man, the soul.
 4. Yet, all spiritual blessings are found in Christ; thus, there are none found outside of Him.
 - a. This includes forgiveness, fellowship, prayer, worship, etc.
 - b. Yet, it also included spiritual gifts – miraculous abilities available in the early church.
- D. These blessing in Christ are said to be in heavenly places.
1. This does not mean in Heaven, for the saint possesses these blessing now.
 2. Yet, they are related to and tied to the heavenly; for, the church is the kingdom of Heaven (cf. Matt. 3:2; 4:17; 5:3; 11:11; 13:24).
 3. These blessings belong to the heavenly kingdom and help to fit man to enter into that eternal home in Heaven.
- E. Thus, the Christian (in Christ) is a citizen of Heaven (cf. Phil. 3:20; Col 3:1-3).

1:4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world

- A. Paul declared that we are blessed with all spiritual blessings because God has chosen us.
 - 1. Notice that the terms “us” and “we” are used in verses 3-12.
 - 2. Paul states that this refers to those “who first trusted in Christ” (v. 12).
 - 3. Beginning in verse 13, he writes of “ye” and “your.”
 - 4. Some believe that “us” and “we” refer to the Jews, while “ye” and “your” refer to the Gentiles.
 - 5. Others think that “us” and “we” refer to Paul and the first converts to Christ, while “ye” and “your” refer to later converts – especially those at Ephesus.
 - 6. The point of the passage is made clear in verse 10 – *“he might gather together in one all things in Christ.”*
- B. The Greek word for “chosen” means, “To pick out, to choose for one’s self.”
 - 1. During Old Testament times, God chosen people were the Israelites.
 - 2. To be one of God’s chosen, a person had to be a part of this one nation.
 - 3. But, before the foundation of the world, God had planned already that individuals from all nations would be His chosen people.
- C. Thus, God’s choosing of men would be individual – not nationally or racially.
- D. Instead, God chooses men by establishing conditions which individual may choose to comply with or reject.
- E. Thus, He has chosen us “in Him” – that is, those who are in Christ are the chosen of God.
- F. God performed this choosing “before the foundation of the world.”
 - 1. There are two ideas to be considered from this phrase.
 - 2. Most likely, this refers to God’s plan of the ages – His scheme of redemption – being in mind before He ever created man (cf. Matt. 25:34; John 17:24; Acts 15:18; 1 Peter 1:20; Rev. 13:8; etc.).
 - 3. However, some relate the word “world” to the Jewish system.
 - 4. To them, “before the foundation of the world” means, “before the ordering of the Jewish age.”
 - 5. Thus, God’s promise to Abraham that all families of the earth would be blessed supersedes the Law of Moses (cf. Gen. 12:1-3; Gal. 3:17ff).

That we should be holy and without blame before him in love

- A. Notice that as a part of His choosing, God has determined what kind of people we should be.
- B. God does not choose individuals and then force them to be holy and blameless against their will.
- C. Rather, individuals who learn God’s will and are obedient to it, are made holy and blameless; thus, they become one of God’s chosen (cf. 1 Pet. 1:1-2; John 10:16; Acts 13:48; 18:9-10; Rom. 8:28ff; 2 Thes. 2:13-14; Jam. 2:5).
- D. To be holy is to be sanctified, set apart from the world for the service of God.
- E. To be without blame is to be unblemished and faultless because sins are forgiven.
- F. Thus, one who obeys the Gospel may stand before God in love – as an object of His favor and recipient of His blessings.

1:5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself

- A. The word “predestinated” is often misunderstood and misused in the religious world.
 - 1. The Greek word (*proorizo*, προορίζω) means, “To define or determine beforehand; to foreordain; to predetermine.”
 - 2. The root word (*horizo*, ορίζω) means, “To mark out the boundaries or limits.”
 - 3. It comes from the root (*horion*, οριον) that means, “Boundary or boundary line.” {We get the word “horizon” and the name Orion from this root.}
- B. As it is used in the New Testament, this word means that God set the boundaries or limits of salvation when He first instituted His plan of redemption.
 - 1. This was a mystery that is revealed in the Gospel (1 Cor. 2:6-8).
 - 2. This required the sacrifice of Jesus (Acts 4:26-28).
 - 3. This required God’s calling and justifying man (Romans 8:28-32).
 - 4. This required the establishing of the church (Ephesians 1:5, 9-11).
- C. Thus, God predestined a plan and a place – the Gospel and the church.
 - 1. Any who comply with the plan, by obeying the Gospel, are added to the church.
 - 2. All who enter into the church enter into God’s predetermined place of salvation.
 - 3. Thus, all who are in the church are saved – and, they are a part of the chosen, foreordained and predestinated.
 - 4. God does not predestine individuals to salvation or condemnation; rather, he allows all to choose their eternal destiny.
- D. God’s predestination results in “the adoption of children.”
 - 1. Those who obey the Gospel are adopted into God’s family.
 - 2. Those who receive Jesus are given the authority to become children of God (John 1:12).
 - 3. This right is made available to all people (John 11:51-52).
 - 4. But, only those who are led by the Spirit – follow the teaching of the Holy Spirit – are the children of God (Romans 8:14-17).
 - 5. This requires one’s being redeemed by God (Galatians 4:3-6).
- E. Thus, when one obeys the Gospel, he is adopted by Jesus and to Jesus.
 - 1. It is by Jesus (and His sacrifice) that the adoption is made possible.
 - 2. It is into the family of Jesus that one is adopted.
- F. This is a different relationship than being children of God by creation.

1:6 According to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace

- A. God provided this means of salvation because of His benevolence and kindness toward man.
- B. His will toward man is one of kindness and mercy.
- C. The result is His praise.
- D. Men should praise the glory of God’s grace – the provisions made possible by His grace – for, without it, all would be lost.
- E. This harkens back to verse 3 – “Blessed be God.”

Wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved

- A. The Greek word for “made accepted” is worthy of closer examination.
 - 1. It means, “To bestow special honor; to compass with favor; to peruse with grace; to honor with blessings; to make graceful.”
 - 2. This word is tied to God’s “glorious grace.”
 - 3. The ASV translates it as: “...his grace, which he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.”
 - 4. The ESV reads: “...his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.”
 - 5. This word is found one other time in the New Testament – Luke 1:28.
 - a. Here, it refers to Mary being “highly favored” by being chosen as the mother of Jesus.
 - b. In this verse, this word is translated as: “highly favored,” “O favored one,” “one having received grace,” or “one endued with grace.”
 - 6. God has blessed us with all spiritual blessings by freely bestowing grace upon us – thus, allowing us to become His adopted children.
- B. By His grace, God makes sinners accepted – “graciously accepted,” “subjects of His grace,” “embraced us in the arms of His grace” – fit to be a part of His Son’s body (cf. Romans 3:24; 5:15).
- C. This grace is found in one place only – in the Beloved.
 - 1. This phrase, in reference to Jesus, is found nowhere else in the NT.
 - 2. However, God declared that Jesus was His beloved Son (Matthew 3:17; 17:5; Colossians 1:13; cf. Isaiah 42:1).
 - 3. The only way to receive and benefit from the grace of God is to be in Christ – a part of His body, citizen of His kingdom, member of His church.