

Ephesians

Lesson Four Spiritual Blessings in Christ

1:7-14

Introduction:

1. Consider the blessings found in Christ mentioned in this passage.
2. Redemption, Forgiveness, Grace, Wisdom, Prudence, Knowledge, Benevolence, Unity, Fellowship, Inheritance, Salvation, Seal, Assurance, Purchased Possession
3. There is no greater blessing than to be a Christian, a member of the Lord's church.

1:7 In whom we have redemption through his blood

- A. Those who are the chosen and predestined of God are those who become members of His Son's body, the church.
- B. In Christ all spiritual blessings are found – including redemption.
 1. The Greek word for 'redemption' comes from two words that mean, "To be loosed from" or "to have loosed off."
 2. Thus, the word itself means, "To ransom in full;" "a releasing effected by payment of ransom;" "deliverance or liberation."
 3. The word is found nine times in the New Testament (Luke 21:28; Romans 3:24; 8:23; 1 Corinthians 1:30; Ephesians 1:7, 14; 4:30; Hebrews 9:14, 15; 11:35 – "*deliverance*").
- C. For the Christian, redemption means that a price has been paid to purchase freedom from sin, death and hell.
 1. This is something that man could never purchase for himself.
 2. Only God could provide a remedy for the problem of sin (cf. Rom. 3:23-24).
- D. The price paid for sin is the blood of Jesus (cf. Zech. 13:1; Matt. 26:28; Col. 1:14; Heb. 9:12-15, 22; 1 Pet. 1:18-19; Rev. 1:5; 5:9; 7:14).
 1. It was not the blood of animal sacrifices under the Old Testament.
 2. It was not the blood of animal sacrifices in Gentile idolatry.
 3. It was not the practices and rituals of the mystery religions and the occult.
 4. Only the blood of Jesus can wash away sin!
- E. This same blood purchased the church (Acts 20:28); thus, redemption in Christ is equivalent to salvation in the church.

The forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace

- A. Redemption is possible because, in Christ, there is forgiveness of sins.
 1. The Greek word for 'forgiveness' comes from a root word that means, "To send forth; thus, to remit, lay aside, forsake, put away or yield up."
 2. The word for 'forgiveness' means, "Release from bondage or imprisonment; pardon, freedom, liberty or deliverance" and includes "remission of the penalty."
 3. This word is found 17 times in the New Testament and is translated as "remission" (9 times), "forgiveness" (6 times), "deliverance" (1 time), and "liberty" (1 time).

- B. Thus, by the blood of Christ, man is pardoned of sins, delivered from guilt and punishment, and redeemed from Satan to fellowship with God.
- C. All this is possible because of the riches of God's grace.
 - 1. The word 'riches' means, "Abundance, wealth, fullness or plenty."
 - 2. God does not possess just a little grace; but, He provides for man out of the abundant wealth of His grace!
- D. Thus, as we walk in the light, we can be sure of forgiveness through the grace of God and the blood of Jesus.

1:8 Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence

- A. Yet, God's grace has made available other things – including wisdom.
- B. The immediate context indicates that this wisdom is a reference to miraculous inspiration (cf. vs. 9, 17-18; 3:3-5).
- C. However, uninspired men have access to the wisdom of God when they read and study His Word.
 - 1. Eph. 1:17 - Wisdom with revelation
 - 2. Col. 2:3 - Wisdom with knowledge (*wisdom in perception*)
 - 3. Col 1:9 - Wisdom with understanding (*wisdom in judgment*)
 - 4. Eph. 1:8 - Wisdom with prudence (*wisdom in action*)
 - 5. True wisdom comes only from God; yet, it must be joined with proper perception, judgment and action.
- D. The word for "prudence" means, "Mental action or activity; intellectual or moral insight; holy love for the will of God." (Cf. Luke 1:17 – *wisdom*)
- E. In the riches of His grace, God has super-abounded toward us by revealing true wisdom and moral insight in His Word.

1:9 Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself

- A. Thus, God has made known what had previously been a mystery.
 - 1. This is how God's grace abounded toward man in wisdom.
 - 2. The word for "mystery" means, "A hidden thing, secret."
 - 3. But, this does not mean that it would always be hidden or secret (Rev 1:10).
 - 4. Paul wrote of what had once been a mystery but is now revealed.
 - 5. This mystery was not unknowable, but it had not been made known until the giving of the New Testament (cf. 3:3-4, 9; 6:19; Rom. 16:25; 1 Cor. 2:7-10; Col. 1:26-27).
 - 6. Furthermore, this mystery is not knowable only to a select group of people – anyone can learn God's revealed will (cf. Matt. 13:11; Mk. 4:11; Lk. 8:10).
- B. Again, the act of revealing His will to man is a part of the grace of God and a spiritual blessing realized fully in Christ.
- C. God made known His truth because of His benevolence – good pleasure – toward man.
- D. Yet, He revealed this things by His own plan and purpose and in His own time.
- E. This stands in contrast to the "mystery religions" of Ephesus and the Greek and Roman world.
 - 1. To understand the mysteries of those religions, one must engage in occult practices or rites of initiation.
 - 2. To know God's will, one must simply study His Word.

1:10 That in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him

- A. Thus, God sent His Son and founded the church in the “fullness of times.”
 - 1. The word “dispensation” means, “The management of a household; the oversight or administration of other’s property; stewardship.”
 - 2. Thus, this word is translated as “steward” (3 times), “stewardship” (3 times), and “dispensation” (4 times) [1 Cor. 9:7; Eph. 1:10; 3:2; Col. 1:25].
 - 3. The idea is that God managed the times until everything was right to bring His plan to fruition and fulfillment.
 - 4. Thus, J. W. Shepherd wrote: *“The coming of Christ into the world marks the new ear in history, dividing it into two parts. The appearance of Christ marking the turning point between them.”*
 - 5. Foy E. Wallace, Jr. wrote that God’s *“purpose was according to the regulations of a divine economy – an arrangement for [an] appointed time.”*
- B. When the time was right, the church was established to gather together all – both Jew and Gentile – in one body (cf. 2:15).
- C. Thus, all things are brought together in Christ; for, He is the head of all things in God’s divine administration (cf. 1:22-23; 3:15; Heb. 1:1-2).
- D. Consider: If all things are brought together in Christ in this dispensation, what need is there of another, future dispensation? *There would be nothing in it!*
 - 1. The Greek word used for “gather together in one” means, “To sum up; to condense in a summary” (cf. Romans 13:9).
 - 2. Thus, all is now summed up in Christ. There is nothing left to bring together (cf. Colossians 1:16-20).

1:11 In whom also we have obtained an inheritance

- A. The ASV reads: “In whom also we were made a heritage.”
 - 1. The Greek word means, “To cast lots; to determine or choose by lot; to allot or to assign by lot.”
 - 2. Thus, it means to make something a private or personal possession.
- B. There are two ideas present in this statement.
 - 1. By God’s grace, according to His purpose in Christ, Christians are made a heritage of God.
 - 2. Those who obey the Gospel of Christ become the prized possession of God (1 Peter 2:9).
 - 3. Yet, in Christ, the Christian is allotted an inheritance – eternal life in Heaven (Acts 20:32; 26:18; Rom. 8:17; Col. 1:12; 3:24; Titus 3:7; 1 Pet. 1:14).
- C. Also, there is a connection in this passage to the original Jewish converts to Christ – those who “first trusted in Christ.”
 - 1. The Promised Land of Canaan was divided unto them by lot.
 - 2. In like manner, they were the first to hear the Gospel and to receive the spiritual inheritance God had promised.

Being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will

- A. This heritage was according to God’s predetermined plan (cf. Gen. 12:1-3).
- B. God accomplishes His purpose according to the wisdom of His own will.

1:12 That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ

- A. It is important to understand who those were “who first trusted in Christ.”
 - 1. The Greek word for “first trusted” is *proelpizo* (προελπιζω).
 - a. The first part, *pro*, means “Before, prior, or in front of.”
 - b. The last part, *elpizo*, means “To expect or hope; trust.”
 - c. Thus, the word actually refers to those who first hoped for or expected the Christ.
 - d. The ASV reads: “We who had before hoped in Christ.”
 - 2. This is a reference to the Jewish Christians who had looked for the coming of the Messiah and accepted Jesus as the fulfillment of that hope.
 - 3. This would include Jews like Simeon and Anna (Luke 2:34-38), the apostles, the faithful 120 (Acts 1:15), and those who had obeyed the Gospel since Pentecost – including Paul.
 - 4. It also was according to God’s plan that the Gospel would be preached to the Jews first, and then to the Gentiles.
- B. Paul and the other Christians (especially the apostles) had heard, believed and obeyed the Gospel before the church at Ephesus was established.
- C. The result of their obedience was the praise of God’s glory.
- D. This is also why they had come to Ephesus as evangelists.

1:13 In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation

- A. After the Gentiles heard the word of truth, they also learned to hope in Christ.
- B. Salvation is always preceded by hearing God’s Word (cf. Rom. 10:17).
- C. The Gospel is the good news of salvation.

In whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise

- A. Upon hearing the Gospel, the Gentiles came to believe in Jesus as the Christ, just as the faithful Jews – God’s true heritage – had done.
- B. As a result of their belief in and obedience of Jesus, they were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.
 - 1. The word ‘sealed’ actually means, “To stamp (with a signet or private mark); to set a mark upon, mark with a seal.”
 - 2. It is used 27 times in the New Testament (cf. Matthew 27:66; John 3:33-34; Romans 15:27-28; 2 Corinthians 1:22; Ephesians 4:30; Revelation 7:3-8; 10:4; 20:3; 22:10).
- C. This seal is tied to the promise – and, it is a reference to miraculous gifts.
 - 1. The Jews who first obeyed the Gospel were promised the “gift of the Holy Ghost” (Acts 2:38).
 - 2. This gift was given by the laying on of the hands of an apostle (Acts 2:16-18; 8:15-17).
 - 3. Yet, this promise was not limited to the Jews (Acts 2:39).
 - 4. Thus, when the Gospel was preached to the Gentiles and they were obedient to it, they received the same miraculous gifts as the Jews had manifested (cf. Acts 19:1-7).
- D. So, God fulfilled the same promise and gave the same seal to both Jew and Gentile.

- E. The bigger picture in this passage is God's great plan of the ages for the salvation of man from sin.
1. Vs. 10 – God had gathered together all aspects of the former times in one fulfillment, in Christ and the new dispensation (the Gospel Age).
 2. Vs. 11 – The preaching of the Gospel to the Gentiles (including the Ephesians) and their salvation by obedience was part of God's predestined plan and purpose.
 3. Vs. 12-14 – The work of the Holy Spirit was to “*reveal* and *seal* and *guarantee* this divine plan.”
 - a. The revelation came to the Jews first, and then to the Gentiles.
 - b. The goal was for Jew and Gentile to be fellow-citizens (2:19) and fellow-heirs (3:6) in Christ.
 - c. Thus, the Gentiles had to be certain they had received the same salvation, promise, blessings and heritage as the Jews.
 - d. The assurance of this came by the Holy Spirit.
 - i. First, and foremost, by the revelation of truth.
 - ii. Secondly, by the manifestation of miraculous gifts.
 - e. Jesus revealed how God sealed Him (John 3:33-34; 6:27), by bestowing upon Him complete authority and confirming it by miracles.
 - i. A seal is a stamp of authority (cf. Acts 9:2; 26:10).
 - ii. God proved His authority in men by miraculous abilities (cf. Acts 4:7).
 - f. This same process was used with the apostles (2 Cor. 1:21-22).
 - g. Thus, the Ephesians could be assured of their salvation because they had heard the Word of Truth, confirmed by miracle.
- F. Today, we do not have (or, need) miraculous gifts; but, we have the same assurance the Ephesians had – for we have God's completed and confirmed revelation.

“In harmony with the statement of verse 10, the whole argument of the apostle is dispensational. In the period of creation (Genesis 1), the Spirit brooded as a hovering bird to bring forth that which the Creator *said*, until the work of creation was finished. So in the period of the second creation the Holy Spirit brooded and hovered over the new church in the special gifts and powers and direction until it was finished in complete revelation. There was a direct sealing then, but the Word of Truth has been sealed. We have the seal and the stamp upon us, to be sure, but it is not the same in action – we have the *sign*, *seal* and *brand* stamped on us through the Word of Truth.”

Foy E. Wallace, Jr.

1:14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory

- A. Paul declared that being sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise was the earnest of the inheritance of the Ephesians.
 - 1. This word, “earnest,” is found 3 times in the NT (2 Cor. 1:22; 5:5).
 - 2. It comes from a Hebrew word that meant, “An exchange, pawn, or pledge given as security.”
 - 3. Thus, it refers to “money given as a pledge or down payment that the full amount will subsequently be paid.”
 - 4. However, in the NT, this word is always used in connection with the Holy Spirit – and, should be understood as “assurance” or “guarantee.”
- B. Note that the Holy Spirit Himself is not the earnest of our inheritance.
 - 1. Many people use this passage to teach a direct influence of the Spirit.
 - 2. Others use it to teach the personal indwelling of the Holy Spirit.
 - 3. They say that His influence or indwelling is the down payment on the Christian’s eternal salvation in Heaven.
 - 4. In other words, we can know we are going to Heaven because of the influence or indwelling of the Holy Spirit.
 - 5. The Bible nowhere teaches these ideas.
- C. The earnest of inheritance is one’s being sealed with the Holy Spirit.
 - 1. The Holy Spirit sealed them with miraculous abilities.
 - 2. Today, we are sealed by the Spirit through the Word of God.
 - 3. Thus, it is the knowledge of inspired, confirmed Truth that is the assurance of one’s inheritance.
 - 4. By God’s Word, one can know that He is saved (cf. Rom. 8:15-17, 23).
 - 5. By God’s Word, one can know He has received the promise (Acts 2:38-39).
 - 6. By God’s Word, one can know that He will go to Heaven.
- D. Until we receive final redemption from the grave, we walk by faith in the Spirit-inspired Word of God.
- E. Our faith is grounded and settled because we are a purchased possession.
 - 1. Purchased by the blood of Jesus (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 2:9; Titus 2:13)
 - 2. The great price paid indicates the greatness of the thing purchased.
 - 3. We are purchased from sin now and from the grave in the future.
 - 4. The Holy Spirit sets the seal of God upon these things by the Truth.
- F. All of this – God’s plan of the ages resulting in the salvation of man – is unto the praise of His glory!