

# **Ephesians 1 - The Riches of the Believer (9 Blessings); Paul's Prayer for Understanding**

## **I. Wealth of the believer (Eph 1:1—3:21)**

### **(1) Greeting (1:1-2)**

(A) Sender (1:1a)

(B) Recipients (1:1b)

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  - (a) Magnitude (1:19)
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    - (3) Christ as head of church (1:22b-23)

## Ephesians 1

### I. Wealth of the believer (Eph 1:1—3:21)

#### (1) Greeting (1:1-2)

(A) Sender (1:1a)

(B) Recipients (1:1b)

**1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, To the saints who are at Ephesus and are faithful in Christ Jesus:**

**1** 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:*

**1** From: Paul, an apostle of the Messiah Jesus by God's will. To: His holy and faithful people in Ephesus who are in union with the Messiah Jesus.

**1** Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus:

- "Paul" - means "small"; originally Saul (Acts 7:58), after King Saul, also a Benjamite. Benjamites were known for their warrior temperament; feisty; tough.

— Paul was born in Tarsus as a free-born Roman citizen; he was schooled in Hellenistic culture and had Pharisaical training by Gamaliel himself

- "...apostle" - "sent one"; can be used in either a general or particular sense

— Sometimes it refers generally to anyone sent out as a representative of Christ (Acts 14:4,14; 2 Cor 8:23; Phil 2:25). Similar to a missionary. Usually it refers to one of the 12 apostles or Paul, who saw the risen Christ, as it does here.

- "...by the will of God" - the Lord Jesus commissioned and sent Paul out with the gospel message. Paul did not choose his occupation—neither did the Church!

— He received his apostleship on the Damascus Road because of God's will or decision, not his own choosing (Acts 26:16-18)

- "...saints" - 9x in this letter, as well as in Acts 9:13,32,41; the Church doesn't make them, God does. It's clear from the outset that Paul is writing to believers.
- Simply means "set apart"; not a sinless person, but a saved sinner. Christians are also called disciples (Acts 9:1,10,19,25-26,36,38), and people "of the Way" (Acts 9:2).
- "...who are at Ephesus" - the Epistle to the Ephesians was a circular letter for the churches in that day
- He's not writing here to the local church as much as he is to the Church in general; that is, the invisible body of believers. This epistle is encyclical—encompasses all churches; it includes no personal comments. It was written after Colossians and sent by Tychicus (Col 4:15).
- "...in Christ Jesus" - used 27x in this epistle; when Paul uses the term "in Christ," "in Him" or something similar, he is revealing something that is true of the believer's position
- It refers to the believer's union with Jesus, their new position "in Him"

(C) Salutation: grace and peace (1:2)

- 2 **Grace** to you and **peace** from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
- 2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
- 2 May grace and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus, the Messiah, be yours!
- 2 Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.
- "Grace" - *charis*, God's unmerited favor
- Grace is always mentioned first. Only after grace has dealt with the sin question can peace be known (Rom 5:1).
- "...peace" - Heb. *shalom*, our condition resulting from God's grace to us
- We have peace with God and we can experience the peace of God (the fullness of His blessings) because of His grace

(2) Riches (1:3-14)

(A) Riches enumerated (1:3-14)

(a) Chosen by the Father (1:3-6)

(i) Blessing (1:3-5)

(a) Every spiritual blessing (1:3)

- 3 Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who **hasblessed** us with **every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places* in Christ**,
- 3 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,
- 3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus, the Messiah! He has blessed us in the Messiah with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realm,

**3** Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:

- This verse begins a long run-on sentence in Greek which lasts through v14...

- "...has blessed" - past tense; as believers, we have already been blessed with every spiritual blessing God has made available to believers

- God gave us these blessings at the moment of salvation

- "...every" - there are no blessings that God has not yet given to every believer

- If you ask God for an additional blessing, He'll tell you that He has nothing left to give you. The cupboard of blessing is empty; your cup is full, there is nothing else for God to give that He hasn't already given you. Our job now is to recognize and appropriate these blessings.

- "...spiritual blessing" - benefits that relate to our spiritual life in contrast to our physical life

- Paul will give us 9 spiritual blessings in v3-14...election, predestination, adoption, grace, redemption, forgiveness, knowledge, sealing, and inheritance. Other spiritual blessings outlined elsewhere include: expiation (removal of sin's penalty), atonement, reconciliation (reconciled to God), eternal life, forgiveness, imputation, regeneration, propitiation (satisfaction of divine wrath), and justification. Also includes the Scriptures.

- Blessings for the Church Age are spiritual blessings, as opposed to physical/material/earthly blessings, which were promised to Israel. The NT never promises the Church physical/material blessings the way Israel had them. It promises us that we have already been blessed with every blessing—in heaven.

- Promoters of the Prosperity Gospel take the physical and earthly promises to Israel in the OT (Cf. Deut 28:1-14) and apply them to believers today in the Church Age, but Scripture never does that

- Since God has already given us these blessings, we do not need to ask for them; we should appropriate them by faith, and be thankful for them

- See note: **The Position of the Believer** below.

- "...in the heavenly *places*" - refers to the location from which these blessings come. The "heavenlies" are where Paul spoke of the believer as being presently in their spiritual life. Physically we are on earth, but positionally we are already with Christ in heaven (Cf. v20; 2:6; 3:10; 6:12).

- These blessings are not an increase in your bank account; the blessings that we've received from God far exceed human finances. In fact, to promote these blessings in monetary terms would be cheapening the blessing because these aren't material or earthly blessings, but rather heavenly/spiritual blessings.

- Israel is God's earthly people. They were blessed with material goods. As they obeyed the Mosaic Covenant, God promised to bless their agriculture, prosperity, military battles,

etc. (Deut 28). The Church is God's heavenly people, and consequently our blessings are far greater than Israel's, which were merely earthly blessings.

— This is not to diminish physical or material wealth to the Church Age believer. God often blesses us physically and materially, but that's just not part of the "guaranteed package" for a Church Age believer.

- "...in Christ" - key term throughout the NT, also in Ephesians (36x); it describes the believer's position in Christ; once we come to Christ, we are "in Christ"...that is our position. My position "in Christ" come from? It comes from the grace of God (Cf. v6; 2:7).

— Our position means the way God sees us, not how we really are, but as we are "in Christ"

— The primary purpose of Ephesians is to lay out for us the blessings of our position in Christ (Eph 1-3), then follow the ~35 commands in Eph 4-6 so that our practice in daily life matches our position "in Christ"

### **The Position of the Believer**

1. You became part of God's eternal plan (Rom 8:28-30)
2. You were redeemed from the slave market of sin (Rom 3:24; 8:23; Eph 1:7; 1 Peter 1:18-19)
3. You were reconciled to God (Rom 5:10; 2 Cor 5:18-20)
4. You were saved from the penalty of sin (death/hell) (John 3:16; Eph 2:8)
5. You have obtained eternal life (John 3:16; 5:24)
6. You are no longer under condemnation (Rom 8:1)
7. You are now a child of God (Gal 3:26)
8. You are now accepted in Christ (Eph 1:6)
9. You are now forgiven of all sin—past, present, and future (Col 1:14; 2:1)
10. You are now dead to sin (Rom 6:6,11a)
11. You are now alive unto God (Rom 6:4,11b)
12. You are free from the Law as a way of life (Rom 6:14; 7:4,6; 8:2)
13. You are justified in God's sight (Rom 3:24-30; 5:1)
14. You are (positionally) sanctified in Christ (1 Cor 1:2)
15. You were brought near to God (Eph 2:13)
16. You were rescued from Satan's power (Col 1:13a)
17. You were translated into Christ's kingdom (Col 1:13; 1 Thess 2:12; 2 Peter 1:11)
18. You were given by God to Christ (John 10:29; 17:6)
19. You will never be separated from God's love (Rom 8:35-39)
20. You became a king-priest (1 Peter 2:5)
21. You are a chosen and protected person (1 Peter 2:9)
22. You are a citizen of heaven (Luke 10:20; Phil 3:20; Eph 2:19; Heb 12:22-24)
23. You are a new creation in Christ (2 Cor 5:17)

24. You have been born again (1 Cor 4:15)
25. You are light in the Lord (Eph 5:8; 1 Thess 5:4)
26. You are complete in Christ (Col 2:10)
27. You have a standing in grace (Rom 5:2)
28. You are glorified in Christ (Rom 8:30)
29. You are a joint heir with Christ (Rom 8:17; Eph 1:14; Col 3:24; 1 Peter 1:4)
30. You have been regenerated, baptized, indwelt, and sealed by the Holy Spirit (John 3:16; 1 Cor 12:13; Eph 1:13-14)
31. You have been crucified to the world (Gal 6:14)
32. You are secure in Christ (John 10:27-29; Rom 8:38-39; 1 Peter 1:4-5)
33. You have peace with God (Rom 5:1)
34. You own every spiritual blessing (Eph 1:3)

Now Paul, as if he just found a treasure chest full of our spiritual blessings, begins pulling them out one by one...

(b) Chose believing sinner to be holy (1:4)

4 just as **He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless** before Him. **In love**

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

4 just as he chose us in the Messiah before the creation of the universe to be holy and blameless in his presence. In love

4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:

- "...He chose us" - the first "blessing" (v3) is election: God sovereignly chose some people for salvation (v11; Rom 8:30; 1 Thess 1:4; 2 Thess 2:13; Titus 1:1). Did God choose me or did I choose God? Both.

— The near purpose of election is our salvation (2 Thess 2:13; 2 Tim 2:10); the intermediate purpose is a holy life (v1:4); the ultimate purpose is God's glory (v6)

— Many passages that make it clear that God chose us, and also many that make it clear that we have free will to choose God. What is also clear is that in eternity past, God made a move toward us so that we would believe, but that doesn't negate our free will to believe.

— Election is always spoken of as a blessing for which we should give thanks (Cf. v3-4; 2 Thess 2:13; 1 Thess 1:4)

— Christ is God's "Elect One" (Is 42:1,6f; Cf. Matt 12:18), but His election is of a different nature than ours. He was elected to be the Redeemer; we were elected to be redeemed.

- "...in Him" - our election has its foundation in Christ in the sense that apart from Christ and His special relationship with us, and His unforeseen work, there would be no election
- "...before the foundation of the world" - see note below; Cf. 2 Tim 1:9
- Spurgeon: "I'm glad He did it then; if he saw me now, he might have changed his mind."
- Two purposes for our election:
  - "...that we would be holy" - *hagious*, different and set apart to God. The purpose for God electing us is so that He could sanctify us (make us more like Christ).
  - "...blameless" - *amomous*, without blemish (Cf. 5:27; Phil 2:15; Col 1:22; Heb 9:14; 1 Peter 1:19; 2 Peter 3:14; Rev 14:5)
- He did not choose us because we were good or because we would do some good; He chose us so that we could do some good
- Practice: A holy life is demanded by God's election
- Position: The secret to our holiness is that it is imputed (transferred) to us from Christ. At the moment of belief, God took the holiness of His Son Jesus and transferred (imputed) that righteousness to us.
- If Christians understood how God sees them, we would live differently, we would certainly pray differently. We tend to always live beneath our position.
- Martin Luther called this the "great exchange"...at the moment of belief, there was a great exchange in heaven...my sin (past, present, and future) was exchanged for the righteousness of Christ. My imperfections were replaced by His perfections. Consequently, righteous is my identity in Christ...it is how God sees me now (Cf. Phil 3:9).
- "...in love" - as noted in v3, v3-14 is one long run-on sentence...this is significant because it links our election ("He chose us in Him," v4) with all of God's other attributes (love, v4; glory, v6; according to His purpose, v11)
- The way the Holy Spirit reveals the doctrine of election in the Bible is that He wants us to understand that God, when He exercises His prerogative of choice, does so in harmony with all of His other attributes
- So this is a good lesson here with election...when I encounter things in the Bible that I don't understand, or that seem unfair, I need to rest in who He is because He is good. He is the very definition of goodness. And if we can get to this point in our understanding of God, I don't have to understand everything.
- As a young Christian, you may want all the loose ends battened down, but as you grow in your knowledge of Scripture and who God is, you understand that it's not necessary that you know everything because I know at the end of the day God is a good, loving God

Everyone finds the doctrine of election difficult. "Didn't I choose God?" some may ask, to which the answer is, "Yes, indeed you did, and freely, but only because in eternity past God first chose you." Another may say, "Didn't I decide for Christ?" to which we must reply,

"Yes, indeed you did, and freely, but only because in eternity past God had first decided for you."

Election involves a paradox that the NT does not seek to resolve, and that our finite minds cannot fathom. Paul emphasizes both the sovereign purpose of God and man's free will. See Soteriology 02 Election (2 Peter 3:9) for more details and Scripture references on election.

### Foundation of the World

- God existed before the foundation (Gen 1:1; Ps 90:2; Is 40:21)
- Christ existed before the foundation (Is 48:16; Micah 5:2; John 1:1; 17:5,24)
- Christ was loved by the Father before the foundation (John 17:24)
- Wisdom was established before the foundation (Prov 8:23)
- Believers were predestined for salvation before the foundation (Eph 1:4; 2 Tim 1:9)
- Church Age believer's names were written in the Lamb's Book of Life before the foundation (Rev 13:8)
- God promised eternal life before time began (Titus 1:2)
- Christ was foreordained before the foundation (1 Peter 1:20; Rev 13:8)
- Unrevealed secrets of God (the Kingdom) existed before the foundation (Matt 25:34)
- The blood of all the prophets was shed from the foundation (Luke 11:50)

### Election

John 15:16: **You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and *that* your fruit would remain, so that whatever you ask of the Father in My name He may give to you.**

- The lost sinner, left to his own accord (without God's "grace package"), does not seek God (Rom 3:10-11); God, in His love, seeks the sinner (Luke 19:10)
- The offer of salvation is *bona fide* to everyone (John 3:16; 3:36; 5:24; Rom 10:9,13)
- The lost choose to be lost
- Both elements: all that are given, come (John 6:37), all that come, are received
  - God does choose men to salvation (2 Thess 2:13)
  - Believers are elect according to foreknowledge of God (1 Peter 1:2)
  - People can know whether they are elected by their response to the Gospel: they who hear and believe are the elect (1 Thess 1:4-7)
- His purpose will not be completely realized until we are with Him in heaven (1 John 3:2)
- Israel was chosen (Is 42:1; Is 43:20; Deut 7:6-8) through Abraham (Rom 8:28-30) and not for any merit (Ezek 36:20-22)

(c) Predestined to adoption through Christ (1:5)

5 He **predestined** us to **adoption** as sons *and daughters* through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,

5 He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will,

5 he predestined us for adoption to himself through Jesus the Messiah, according to the pleasure of his will,

5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,

- "...predestined" - *proorisos*, to mark out beforehand; this describes how God elected us; aorist tense, describes a definite past act; done

— God determined beforehand that those who believe in Christ will be adopted into His family and conformed to His Son [Ryrie]. This term is only used referring to God's *purposes* for His people.

— In eternity past, God marked believers out for blessing. Before we were born, before we made any decision for Christ, before the world even existed. Predestination is the means by which God chose us (Cf. Rom 8:30). It refers to the "how" instead of the "who" of election. Election emphasizes the people; predestination emphasizes the means (v11; Acts 4:25-28; Rom 8:29-30).

— God predetermined the final destiny of the elect: that we should be His full-fledged "sons" (Cf. Rom 8:15,23; Gal 4:4-7)

— You don't have to understand predestination, you just have to believe it

- "...adoption" - *huiiothesia*, God predetermined that believers would be adopted as full-fledged sons. Adopted children have the same rights/privileges as children born into the family.

— In the Roman culture, an adopted son received the same rights and privileges as children born into the family. Likewise, our adoption does not imply an inferior status in relation to God.

— Before we came to Christ we were God's enemies (Rom 5:10), but the moment we placed our faith in Christ, we were adopted as sons into His family. We do not get into God's family by adoption, but by regeneration; through adoption, God gives His children adult standing in the family, so that we can *immediately* claim our inheritance and enjoy our spiritual wealth.

— Jesus made this adoption possible through the cross

*Men are not lost because they have not been elected. They are lost because they are sinners and that is the way they want it and that is the way they have chosen.* [J.V. McGee]

**Adoption** Adoption was a Roman, not a Jewish, practice; not all offspring were heirs. You do not get into God's family by adoption: you get into His family by regeneration: the new birth (John 3:1-18; 1 Peter 1:22-25). Adoption is the act of God by which He gives His "born ones" an adult standing in the family, so that we can immediately begin to claim our inheritance and enjoy our spiritual wealth! [Wiersbe]

**"Double Predestination"?** Some Calvinists believe that since God predestined the final destiny of those He chose for salvation, it is only logical that he also predestined the damnation of the "non-elect." They say that it is therefore unnecessary for those saved to be concerned with the salvation of individuals, since God has predestined this. This view is called "double predestination," and goes beyond the explicit teaching of Scripture. They get this doctrine from an out-of-context interpretation of Rom 9 (see notes there). The Scriptures never state that God has predetermined the fate of the non-elect. The emphasis of Scripture is on the possibility, from the human viewpoint, of anyone trusting in Jesus and receiving salvation.

(ii) Doxology to the Father (1:6)

**6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, with which He favored us in the Beloved.**

6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.

6 so that we would praise his glorious grace that he gave us in the Beloved One.

6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

- "to the praise of the glory of His grace" - the ultimate goal of God's plan of election and predestination is that believers would glorify God

— "praise" - *doxa*, where we get the term "doxological" as in the purposes of God (see Tag: **Doxological Purpose of God**) (Cf. v12,14)

- "...He favored us in the Beloved" - if He gave His Son for me, then He must love me as greatly as He loves His Son, or He never would have permitted Him to die for me (Cf. John 17:23-24)

### **Three Blessings from the Father**

1. Every spiritual blessing (v3)

- There is no additional spiritual blessing that God could've given you but didn't...He has given us every spiritual blessing available to be given. Nothing has been held back.
- If you ask God for an additional blessing, He'll tell you that He has nothing left to give you. The cupboard of blessing is empty; your cup is full, there is nothing else.

2. Holy and blameless

- God looks at Christians as if they are holy, flawless, and blameless
- The secret to our holiness is that it is imputed (transferred) to us from Christ. At the moment of belief, God took the holiness of His Son Jesus and transferred (imputed) that righteousness to us.

### 3. Adoption

- Family members get more privileges than outsiders (heirs, etc.)
- Before we came to Christ we were God's enemies (Rom 5:10), but the moment we placed our faith in Christ, we were adopted as sons into His family

#### (b) Redeemed by the Son (1:7-12)

##### (i) Blessings (1:7-11)

##### (a) Redemption through his blood (1:7a)

##### (b) Forgiveness of sins (1:7b)

7 In Him we have **redemption** through His blood, **the forgiveness of our wrongdoings**, according to the riches of His grace

7 In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace

7 In union with him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our offenses, according to the riches of God's grace

**7** In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

- God can pour out His grace on us only because of what Christ has done for us

- "...redemption" - *apolytrosis*, to be loosed away or set free from something through the payment of a ransom (v14; 4:30; Luke 21:28; Rom 3:24; 8:23; 1 Cor 1:30; Col 1:14; Heb 9:15; 11:35)

— Matt 20:28: **just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many."**

— It involves the buying back and then setting free of a slave through payment of a ransom

- "...the forgiveness of our wrongdoings" - the immediate result of our liberation from sin's slavery is that God has forgiven our sins (*paraptoma*, false steps, transgressions). Three aspects:

1. Governmental forgiveness: temporal consequences
2. Eternal forgiveness (here): past, present, future
3. Restorative forgiveness: Christian's "bar of soap" (1 John 1:9)

- "...according to the riches of His grace" - the basis of our both our redemption and our forgiveness

### NT Words for Redemption

1. *agorazo*, to purchase; to pay the price sin demanded so that one can be redeemed (1 Cor 6:20; 7:23; 2 Peter 2:1; Rev 5:9; 14:3-4)
2. *exagorazio*, to buy out of the market, never to sell them again; for one's own use (Gal 3:13; 4:5; Eph 5:16; Col 4:5)
3. *lutroo*, to release and set free (Matt 20:28; 2 Tim 2:6; Titus 2:14)

(c) Revelation of redemptive program (1:8-10)

8 which He **lavished on us**. In all **wisdom** and **insight**

8 which He lavished on us. In all wisdom and insight

8 that he lavished on us, along with all wisdom and understanding,

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

- "...lavished on us" - God has given us abundant grace, not just the amount needed. His offering of grace to us is well-over what we need.

- "...wisdom" - *sophia*, knowledge that sees into the heart of things, which knows them as they really are

- "...insight" - *phronesei*, understanding that leads to right action

— "In all wisdom and insight" modifies "God's grace" (v7) "that He lavished on us" (v9).

The wisdom and prudence are God's, not ours.

9 He made known to us the **mystery of His will**, according to His good pleasure which He set forth in Him,

9 He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him

9 when he made known to us the secret of his will. This was according to his plan that he set forth in the Messiah

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

- "...the mystery of his will" - God's purpose to bring everything in submission to Jesus Christ in the future (v10)

— "mystery" - *mystērion*, the NT uses the word "mystery" to refer to a truth that was previously hidden but has now been made known by divine revelation

— A mystery in the NT is a truth which was once hidden but now is revealed; a truth that without special revelation would have been unknown. It does not mean something incomprehensible or something that must be investigated to be found out, as in the English meaning.

— A "mystery" is defined in 3:9 and Col 1:26: "...for ages has been hidden in God who created all things"

— A mystery in Scripture is a truth that without special divine revelation would never have been known; previous allusions (1:9-14,22-23; 2:11-22)

10 regarding *His* plan of the fullness of the **times**, to **bring all things together in Christ**, things in the heavens and things on the earth.

10 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 10 to usher in the fullness of the times and to bring together in the Messiah all things in heaven and on earth.

10 That in the dispensation of the fulness 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:

- "...administration" [NASB95] - *oikonomia*, dispensation [see KJV]; stewardship; economy (ordered condition of things); "house rules"

— A "dispensationalist" is someone who looks at the Bible and recognizes that from age to age, the rules God has in place as He deals with mankind change

— Paul introduces this concept here, but will unfold in Eph 2-3 on how we are living in a very unique time in history, the age of the Church

- Israel has rejected their Messiah, but they will at some future point accept their Messiah (Rom 11, et al), but currently they are blinded. During this time of Israel's blindness, what is God doing? What He is doing is unique and unforeseen in the pages of the OT: the Age of the Church.

— During this time, God is pouring His grace out on the human race like never before. God has always been graceful to man, but the Church Age is a time of unparalleled grace lavished on mankind.

— The plan of personal salvation never changes, no matter what age you are in. In the OT they were looking forward to a Messiah who would come; in the NT we look backward to a Messiah who already came.

— A traditional "dispensationalist" looks at the entire Bible and finds about seven times when God changed the rules. For example, we don't bring an unblemished lamb to church today. But doesn't Leviticus tell you to do that? No matter how "anti-dispensationalist" one might be, you cannot deny the fact that God has changed the rules over time.

— The dispensation in view in this verse is the messianic kingdom, during which everything will be under His rule (1 Cor 15:27; Col 1:20)

- Dispensationalism is a "system" of theology. Also called "traditional-normative" dispensational theology is a system that embodies three essential, fundamental concepts (the *sine qua non* or "without which is not"). [Dr. Charles Ryrie, *Dispensationalism*, pp 38-41]

1. The consistent use of a plain, normal, literal, grammatical-historical hermeneutic (method of interpretation)

2. Which, if consistently used throughout Scripture, reveals that the Church is distinct from Israel
  3. God's overall purpose in history is to bring glory to Himself (Eph 1:6,12,14)
- "...times" - not *chronos*: passage of days, months, years; but *kairos*: particular times, decisive segments of time; periods or eras
  - "...bring all things together in Christ" - *anakephalaisomsasthai*, sum up, unite; Greek practice of adding a column of figures, with sum at the top
  - "all things" - absolute universality; in heaven and on earth (Col 1:17,20; Heb 1:3)

So the revelation is that, with all wisdom and insight, God has revealed to us His purpose to bring everything into submission to Jesus Christ in the future.

### Dispensations

1. Innocence (Gen 1:28—3:6) End: Fall of Man
2. Conscience; Moral Responsibility (Gen 3:7—8:14) End: Flood
3. Human Government (Gen 8:15—11:32) End: Babel
4. Promise—Abraham (Gen 12:1—Ex 18:27) End: Bondage in Egypt
5. Law—Moses (Ex 19:1—Acts 1:26; Rev 4:1—19:21) End: the Ascension
6. Church—"Grace" (Acts 2:1—Rev 3:22) End: Rapture
7. Kingdom (Rev 20:1-10) End: Satan's Rebellion & Final Judgment

Christ was a "dispensationalist" (Cf. Is 61:1-2; Luke 4:16-21)

#### (d) Inheritance (1:11)

11 In Him we also have obtained an **inheritance, having been predestined** according to the **purpose of Him who works all things in accordance with the plan of His will**,

11 also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will,

11 In the Messiah we were also chosen when we were predestined according to the purpose of the one who does everything that he wills to do,

11 In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:

- "...inheritance" - there are more riches to come; we have not yet experienced the full ramifications of our salvation: our glorification

— This has already been credited to our account, we are already guaranteed to be glorified and receive new bodies someday, but it just has not happened yet (1 Peter 1:4)

- "...having been predestined" - *proorizo*, to mark out or determine beforehand. In

Scripture, this is more inclusive than election (which is always limited to those specially

chosen of God).

— God has chosen believers for salvation because He predestined them to have a part in His sovereign plan

— Paul would later say that God's plan for the present involves the Church, which consists of both Jewish and Gentile believers (2:14-22). However, God chose the Jews first (Cf. Acts 3:26; Rom 1:16).

- "...purpose" - *prothesin*, refers to the goal God intends to accomplish

- "...Him who works all things in accordance with the plan of His will" - one of the strongest statements in Scripture to show that God is sovereign (Cf. Ps 115:3; Prov 16:9,33; Dan 4:34-35)

— However, Calvinism has taken this statement and created a theological determinism system that says that God sovereignly controls everything that happens in the world

— "counsel" - *boule*, God's wise, purposeful planning and deliberation

— "will" - *thelema*, willingness

- The point is: God chose a plan after deliberating on the wisest course of action to accomplish His purpose

1 Peter 1:4: to *obtain* an inheritance *which is* imperishable, undefiled, and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,

#### (ii) Doxology to the Son (1:12)

12 to the end that we who were the **first to hope in the Christ** would be to the praise of His **glory**.

12 to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ would be to the praise of His glory.

12 so that we who had already fixed our hope on the Messiah might live for his praise and glory.

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

- Only a tiny remnant of Jews responded to the Gospel in the early days of Christianity. It will be different at His Second Coming (Zech 12:10; Rom 11:26).

- "...first to hope in the Christ" - this shows that the "we" in v11,12 refers to Jews. The Jews were the first to put their trust in Christ (Cf. Acts 1:8; 13:46; 28:25; Rom 1:16; 2:9-10).

- "...glory" - *doxa*, see note on v6 (Cf. v14)

### Four Blessings from the Son

#### 1. Redemption (1:7-11)

- Redemption is a purchase, "through His blood"
- My redemption was free for me, but it wasn't free for God; God poured His wrath out on Himself, His Son, so I wouldn't have to bear His wrath

## 2. Forgiveness (1:7)

- All of my sins, past, present, and future, have been forgiven\
- In 4:32, Paul builds an application on the concept of Christ forgiving us...since He has forgiven us, we should in turn forgive others

## 3. Revelation (1:8-10)

- We have been given wisdom and knowledge
- We can't understand this until we understand our darkened spiritual condition before we came to Christ (Eph 2). The literal Greek translation is that before we came to Christ, we were "walking dead people" and "groping in darkness."

## 4. Inheritance

- More to come...in fact, the best is yet to come (1 Peter 1:4)—our glorification

### (c) Sealed by the Holy Spirit (1:13-14)

#### (i) Blessings (1:13-14a)

##### (a) Sealed (1:13)

13 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 the promise**,

13 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,

13 You, too, have heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed in the Messiah, you were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit,

**13** In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,

- The entire process of salvation is given in this verse...

- "...after" - not time clauses, they are genitive absolutes; all in the same tense as the main verb: aorist tense, once and for all

— A more accurate translation of v13: In whom also you, upon hearing [aorist, once and for all] the word of truth, the good news of your salvation, in whom also on believing [aorist, once and for all] you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise."

— Steps: They heard; they believed; they were sealed (Cf. Rom 10:13-15; Acts 10:34-48)

- "...sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of the promise" - when we trust in Christ, at that very moment, we receive the Holy Spirit (Rom 8:9; 1 Cor 12:13)

— The Holy Spirit is God's "down payment" or earnest deposit on believers, securing us in Him until we are glorified/resurrected — this is the basis for our eternal security (can't lose salvation)

— Sealing indicates ownership and security...a seal typically sealed a document and declared who owned it. It also secured the document because you couldn't open it without

breaking the seal.

— What this means is that no one can interfere with our spiritual blessings...the only thing Satan can do to your spiritual blessings is to keep you ignorant from knowing about them and understanding them, or make you doubt or diminish them in your mind.

— God's spiritual blessings for believers are based not only on the sovereign election of the Father (v3-6) and the redemptive work of Christ (v7-12), but also on the seal of the Holy Spirit

Eph 4:30: Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

(b) Pledge (1:14a)

(ii) Doxology to the Holy Spirit (1:14b)

14 who is a **first installment of our inheritance**, in regard to the **redemption** of God's own possession, to the praise of His **glory**.

14 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.

14 who is the guarantee of our inheritance until God redeems his own possession for his praise and glory.

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

- This verse ends the marathon sentence begun in v3...which sweeps God's program from eternity past...through our present...to eternity future, with the most awe-inspiring thoughts that can occupy the human mind!

- "...first installment of our inheritance" - *arrabōn*, down payment, pledging a promise that the full amount will be paid at a later time

— This guarantee ("earnest") is not just a promise, but is actually the first part of our inheritance, the down payment

— The fact that we possess Him now assures us that the rest of our salvation ([positional] sanctification & glorification) will inevitably follow

— Merging pronouns: "we" (v11-12) with "you" (v13) to "our" (v14); a hint of a new organism, the Church (Eph 2-3)

— Three times he reminds us the intended goal and inevitable result: that God should be magnified and glorified...to the praise of the glory of His grace (v6) that we should be to the praise of His glory (v12) unto the praise of His glory (v14).

- "...redemption" - *apolytrōsis*, future tense

— The Holy Spirit is a down payment that guarantees that everything that God has for us in the future, including the future kingdom and our future body, is a done deal

- When God puts a down payment, it guarantees the rest of the payment is coming
- A different aspect of salvation than what is mentioned in v7 (justification); this use speaks to our future glorification
- "...glory" - *doxa*, see note on v6 (Cf. v12)

Rom 8:30: and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also **justified**; and these whom He justified, He also **glorified**.

- Although our glorification is yet future, Paul spoke of it as a past event. He could say this, not because it has already happened, but *because it is so certain to take place that it is as good as having happened already*.

## Two Blessings from the Spirit

### 1. Sealed (1:13)

- A seal typically sealed a document and meant two things:
  1. Ownership - declared who owned the document
  2. Security - someone else couldn't open the document without breaking the seal
- No one can interfere with a believer's spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus until we are taken to the Lord
- Satan cannot interfere with our spiritual blessings; they are untouchable to him. All he can do is keep this from your knowledge and understanding, or make you doubt or diminish them in your mind.

### 2. Pledge (1:14)

- How can I trust God that one day I will experience the third tense of my salvation: glorification?
- The very fact that the Holy Spirit indwells me and is at work in my life is the pledge that God will "finish the job" of my salvation for that which is currently credited to my account
- Just like a deposit guarantees that the rest of the money will be forthcoming, the Holy Spirit is a down payment on our future glorification, the ultimate manifestation of our salvation

## Free Grace?

What's currently being called the Free Grace Movement is the view that everyone receives eternal life the moment they believe in the Lord's perfect once for all time sacrifice for our sins and accept Him as their personal Savior and Lord. Its advocates believe that God justifies the sinner on the sole condition of faith in Christ, not subsequent righteous living.

They define faith as the belief, trust, and conviction that the Bible's promises are true as written.

Jesus (John 3:16; 6:28-29; 6:40; 10:27-30) and Paul (Rom 8:38-39; Eph 1:13-14; 2 Cor 1:21-22) were two of its earliest proponents. This view is also known as the doctrine of eternal security or OSAS (once saved always saved).

### **The Ramifications of the Ministry of Spirit-Sealing**

Three NT passages (2 Cor 1:22; Eph 1:13-14; 4:30) point out five ramifications of the sealing ministry of the Holy Spirit:

1. The Holy Spirit is both the agent and the seal. He is the agent, that is, the One who does the sealing. He is also the seal itself.
2. The Holy Spirit is the substance of the seal itself, and God is the outside Person who does the sealing. The point is that God the Father is the main cause of sealing, and the Holy Spirit is the intermediate cause of sealing.
3. Sealing is universal among all believers. The only condition for being sealed by the Spirit is believing. Since every believer obviously has believed in Jesus, every believer has been sealed by the Holy Spirit. Sealing is the basis for not grieving the Holy Spirit, which is something only believers can do.
4. The time of sealing is at the point of salvation (Eph 1:13). Literally, the Greek reads, "In whom having believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise." The cause of sealing is merely hearing and believing. From the moment one believes, he is sealed by the Holy Spirit.
5. The significance of being sealed by the Holy Spirit is eternal security. By Spirit baptism, a believer is placed into the Body of the Messiah. By Spirit-sealing, a believer is locked or sealed into the Body so that he can never fall out. The key idea of sealing is eternal security.

### **OT Concept of the Seal**

1. The seal in the OT was a mark of authority (1 Kings 21:7-9; Esther 3:9-12; 8:7-10). Because believers have been sealed, they have authority from God against the world and against Satan.
2. The seal in the OT was a mark of a finished transaction (Jer 32:10-15). For the believer, salvation is a finished work. Having believed, all the benefits of salvation have been applied to the believer, so the seal of the Holy Spirit is the mark of a finished transaction.
3. The seal was a mark of security (Dan 6:17). This is the main point of the Spirit's sealing ministry in the NT: it is a mark of the believer's eternal security.

## The Significance of the Ministry of Spirit-Sealing

The significance of the sealing ministry of the Holy Spirit to believers is five-fold:

1. It signifies the certainty that a believer is possessed by God. God now owns the believer, and the seal is the mark of God's ownership or possession of the believer.
2. It signifies the certainty of the promise of salvation. Only God can break this seal, and He promised not to break it; therefore, the believer's salvation is secure.
3. It signifies the certainty of His purpose to keep the believer until the Day of Redemption. The future redemption is the redemption of the believer's body in the resurrection. The seal guarantees that, should the believer die, he will be resurrected in the day of redemption.
4. It signifies that the believer has the authority of the Messiah with the right to exercise it. The believer has authority over his sin-nature, Satan, and the world.
5. The seal signifies that the transaction for the believer's salvation is finished, although the full enjoyment of it is to come later.

See [Holy Spirit](#) for description of the Holy Spirit's ministry of sealing believers.

### (3) Prayer for comprehension riches (1:15-23)

#### (A) Commendation (1:15-16a)

**15** For this reason I too, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which *exists* among you and your love for all the saints,

**15** For this reason I too, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which *exists* among you and your love for all the saints,

**15** Therefore, because I have heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints,

**15** Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints,

- Paul doesn't pray for believer's to be blessed because he doesn't have to...the believer already has every spiritual blessing. Instead, he prays that believers would understand the blessings that we've already been given.

— This is the first of two prayers; second is at 3:14-21

— In view of their spiritual blessings (outlined in v3-14), Paul felt the need to pray for his original readers

— He could pray for them because they were true believers; in addition to informing them, Paul interceded for them

#### (B) Supplication (1:16b-23)

##### (a) General request for revelation (1:16b-18a)

**16** do not cease giving thanks for you, while making mention *of you* in my prayers;

16 do not cease giving thanks for you, while making mention of you in my prayers;

16 I never stop giving thanks for you as I mention you in my prayers.

16 Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers;

- The prayer life of the believer:

- Frequent concern for the brethren; specific requests for specific saints
- Note petitions for those already saved; gratitude and petitions for them

— All great men of the Bible were men of prayer: Moses, David, Elijah, Daniel... Paul... Christ... James: "Old Camel-knees"

17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of **wisdom** and of **revelation** in the **knowledge** of Him.

17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him.

17 I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus, the Messiah, the most glorious Father, would give you a wise spirit, along with revelation that comes through knowing the Messiah fully.

17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him:

- The Holy Spirit illuminates the believer in the understanding of God's program

— The reason a believer can understand God's program, why God does things sometimes one way and sometimes another way, is because of the witness of the Holy Spirit

- "...wisdom" - *sophia*, enables one to perceive reality accurately

- "...revelation" - the unveiling of the subject contemplated (in this case, God Himself)

- "...knowledge" - *epignosis*, exact, complete, experiential knowledge as opposed to an abstract knowledge of Him, or just knowing facts about Him

— Paul is specifically praying for a specific enablement by the Spirit so his readers would understand the riches ("every spiritual blessing") that God has given to them

— Revelation deals with the imparting of knowledge; wisdom, with the proper use of it in our lives

*Growth in knowledge is indispensable to growth in holiness.*

- To know God personally is justification (John 17:3)
- To know Him increasingly is sanctification (Phil 3:10)
- To know Him perfectly is glorification (1 Cor 13:9-12). [Wiersbe]

(b) Specific request for revelation (1:18b-23)

(i) Hope of the divine calling (1:18b)

(ii) Riches of His glorious inheritance (1:18c)

18 *I pray that* the **eyes of your heart** may be enlightened, so that you will know what is **the hope of His calling**, what are **the riches of the glory of His inheritance** in the saints,

18 *I pray that* the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,

18 Then, with the eyes of your hearts enlightened, you will know the confidence that is produced by God having called you, the rich glory that is his inheritance among the saints,

18 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,

- They would gain this greater knowledge as God would enlighten their understanding

- "...eyes of your heart" - suggests not just intellectual understanding, but total apprehension of God

- Paul's prayer gets specific here, mentioning three realities for believers to understand:

— "...the hope of His calling" - who we are in Christ, our calling

— "...the riches of the glory of His inheritance" - our salvation experience at the present time isn't all there is...the best is yet to come!

### **The Purpose of Paul's Prayer**

Paul prayed this prayer for the Ephesians for three reasons:

1. He wanted his readers "to know" (*eidenai*) the hope that was theirs because God had called them to salvation through election. Every Christian should appreciate their "hope" for the future, which rests on their "calling" to salvation in the past.
2. The readers should realize that they themselves were an inheritance that God would receive when they went to be with Him (God's inheritance is "*in* the saints," v14). This inheritance is valuable because believers are those for whom God paid dearly with the blood of His Son. We are looked upon as a treasure of incomparable worth (Matt 13); a people for God's own possession (Titus 2:14; 1 Peter 2:9).
3. Paul wanted his readers to understand the exceeding greatness of His power, and how that impacts the Christian.

(iii) Greatness of God's power which raised and ascended Christ (1:19-23)

(a) Magnitude (1:19)

19 and what is **the boundless greatness of His power toward us who believe**. *These are* in accordance with the working of the strength of His might

19 and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. *These are* in accordance with the working of the strength of His might

19 and the unlimited greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his mighty strength,

19 And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power,

- "...the boundless greatness of His power toward us who believe" - Paul prays that the Ephesians, and us, would understand the power of God

— The Ephesians were prone to tap into the power (of gods) through mysticism, occultism, and pagan magic. Paul wanted them to understand that power resides with God alone, not in these pagan practices and rituals.

(b) Manifestation (1:20-23)

(1) Displayed Christ (1:20-21)

a. Raising Christ (1:20a)

b. Seating Christ in heaven (1:20b-21)

20 which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly *places*,

20 which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly *places*,

20 which he brought about in the Messiah when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realm.

20 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places,

- Paul explains God's power through the works God the Father has done for God the Son

— The power of God the Father that raised God the Son from the dead is the same power that is at work in our lives today through the Holy Spirit

21 far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.

21 far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.

21 He is far above every ruler, authority, power, dominion, and every name that can be named, not only in the present age, but also in the one to come.

21 Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:

- Paul goes on to speak about the "Present Session" (v21-23)...what Jesus is doing in and through the believer today

— Churches today don't teach about Jesus' Present Session. Christians are taught about what Jesus did during His ministry on earth, and somewhat about what He will do someday future, but very few if any churches teach on what Jesus is doing today.

— Jesus today is looking in two directions: in the past, at His death and resurrection to redeem mankind, and into the future when one day He'll reign on earth from David's Throne. In the meantime, however, He is the believer's High Priest after the Order of Melchizedek.

— It is the power of God the Father who raised God the Son from the dead, ascended Him to heaven and gave Him a place of honor, and is allowing Christ, from this position of honor as our Great High Priest, to minister to believers today in multiple ways.

— See [Present Ministry of Christ](#).

— Interestingly, Paul will take this doctrine of the Present Session of Christ and apply it to marriage in Eph 5

(2) Everything subjected to Christ (1:22a)

(3) Christ as head of church (1:22b-23)

22 And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and made Him **head over all things to the church**,

22 And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church,

22 God has put everything under the Messiah's feet and has made him the head of everything for the good of the church,

**22** And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church,

- The second manifestation of God's power in Christ was the Father subjecting all things to Christ

— His Lordship over creation will be obvious in the future when He reigns during the messianic kingdom (Ps 8:6; 1 Cor 15:27; Heb 2:6-8)

- "...head over all things to the church" - the third manifestation of God's power in Christ is the Son's appointment as Head over the Church (4:15; 5:23; Col 1:18). This aspect of His Lordship is evident now.

— This is one of the works of Christ during His Present Session. See [Present Ministry of Christ](#) for details on what Jesus is doing from heaven today.

23 which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills **all in all**.

23 which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

23 which is his body, the fullness of the one who fills everything in every way.

23 Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

- The Church is both the "body" of Christ and "the fullness of Him who fills" everything in every way: Jesus Christ

- The Church is the “fullness” of Christ probably in the sense that He fills for Himself (middle voice in Greek) the Church with blessings (Cf. 4:10-11).
- Jesus Christ, who fills all things with all things (blessings), is filling the Church with blessings
- “...all in all” - quoted from Ps 8:6 and explicitly linked to Christ (Heb 2:5-10)
- His Headship is not exercised yet (Heb 2:8)

## **Summary**

The nine spiritual blessings Paul identified in v3-14 are: election, predestination, adoption, grace, redemption, forgiveness, knowledge, sealing, and inheritance. They can be summarized in three groups: past election, present adoption, and future unification. The recurrence of the phrase “in Christ” and equivalent expressions emphasizes that all these blessings come with our union with Christ (v3,4,6,7,9,10,12,13 [2x]). The repetition of “His will” and its equivalents emphasizes that the sovereign God is responsible for all these blessings (v5,9,11). These verses (v3-14) contain a compact statement of every believer’s spiritual riches. The passage is similar to a bank statement because it lists every Christian’s spiritual assets.

After showing that believers have received all spiritual blessings (v3-14), Paul prayed that believers might come to know God intimately (v17). This is necessary so we might better appreciate our past calling to salvation, which gives us: hope (v18), the future inheritance that we constitute for God (v18), and the present power of God available to us (v19). God manifested this power in the past at Christ’s resurrection and ascension (v20-21). He will manifest it in the future by making Jesus Christ the Head over all creation (v22). He is currently manifesting this power in Jesus’ headship over the Church (v22-23).