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### Every Spiritual Blessing in Christ

Ephesians 1:1-14

Key verse 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.

1. Read verses 1 and 2. How does Paul introduce himself to the Ephesians? (1a) Why does he call them ‘God’s holy people’ and ‘the faithful in Christ Jesus’? (1b) What can we learn from the way Paul greets the body of Christ throughout his letters? (2)
2. Read verses 3 - 6. How does the Apostle Paul praise God? What does he mean by ‘every spiritual blessing in Christ’? (3b) With what purpose did God choose us? (4) How did we become his children? (5) Why does Paul praise God all the more? (6)

1. Read verses 7 - 10. How are we redeemed? (7, 8a) What is the mystery of God’s will? (7,8a) How was the mystery of God’s will made known to us? (8b, 9) When will the mystery of God’s will put into effect and what will happen? (10)
2. Read verses 11 - 14. How were we chosen? (11) What was the purpose of his will? (12) What happened to the Ephesian believers when they heard the message of truth? (13a) What else happened to them when they believed? (13b) What does the Holy Spirit do for them? (14) What can we learn from this passage?

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### **Every Spiritual Blessing in Christ**

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Key verse 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.

**Introduction**

In today’s passage Paul praises God for the spiritual blessings he has given us through Christ. Everyone wants blessings. God has poured out his abundant spiritual blessings on us through Jesus Christ. Let's think about his blessings one by one so that we may not live in spiritual poverty, but enjoy the rich spiritual blessings God has given us. There are two parts in this passage. Verses 1-2 are the Apostle Paul’s opening greetings to the Ephesians believers. Verses 3-14 are his outpouring praise to God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing. Originally his statement was composed as a single sentence. What an amazing transformation of the Apostle Paul! The Apostle Paul used to be a man who persecuted Christ and his followers, without ceasing. But he became a man of praise towards God, without ceasing. Praise the Lord who is the master of transformation!

1. Read verses 1 and 2. How does Paul introduce himself to the Ephesians? (1a) Why does he call them ‘God’s holy people’ and ‘the faithful in Christ Jesus’? (1b) What can we learn from the way Paul greets the body of Christ throughout his letters? (2)

1-1, Read verses 1 and 2.

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, To God’s holy people in Ephesus, the faithful in Christ Jesus: **2** Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

1-2, How does Paul introduce himself to the Ephesians? (1a)

* He identified himself as an apostle of Christ Jesus.
* Even though he was not chosen as one of Jesus’ disciples from the beginning, he became an apostle by the grace of Jesus Christ.
* He pointed out that it was not by his own decision, but by the will of God.
* He mentions in 3:1 and 4:1 that he is a “prisoner,” and in 6:20 he says he is “an ambassador in chains.” This leads us to believe that Paul wrote this letter while he was in prison.
* It is traditionally believed that Paul wrote Ephesians, as well as Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon, during his first imprisonment in Rome, ca. A.D. 60 or 61.
* Also this letter was known as a circular letter, intended for other churches such as Laodicea, Colossae, in addition to Ephesus.
* We can find a similar pattern to the beginning of his letters in Colossians 1:1-2.

“Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, **2** To God’s holy people in Colossae, the faithful brothers and sisters in Christ: Grace and peace to you from God our Father.”

1-3, Why does he call them ‘God’s holy people’ and ‘the faithful in Christ Jesus’? (1b)

* From a human point of view, the believers in Ephesus were not perfect. They were still vulnerable to greed and immorality, typical of the Gentiles.
* But from God’s point of view they were holy, set apart for the Lord, and very special people.

1-4, What can we learn from the way Paul greets the body of Christ throughout his letters? (2)

* Paul prayed for them to have grace and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
* Grace and peace are God’s gifts to those who put their faith in Jesus. Those who have grace and peace in their hearts do not falter in any situation.

1. Read verses 3-6. How does the Apostle Paul praise God? What does he mean by ‘every spiritual blessing in Christ’? (3b) With what purpose did God choose us? (4a) How did we become his children? (4b, 5) Why does Paul praise God all the more? (6)

2-1, Read verses 3-6.

**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. **4** For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love **5** he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will— **6** to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves.

2-2, How does apostle Paul praise God?

***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.***

* First he praised the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ for he has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.
* The words, “has blessed,” means that God has already given his blessing in full; he did not wait for us to improve before giving us more.
* But the only issue here is that often times we are not aware of this blessing like Jacob who was seeking God’s blessing for more than two decades blindly.
* Jacob later found the fact that he was truly blessed and confessed in Genesis 33:11,

“Please accept the present that was brought to you, for God has been gracious to me and I have all I need." And because Jacob insisted, Esau accepted it.”

* Likewise God has already given us his blessing when we believed in Jesus.
* In the past, we were cursed in Adam. But now, we are blessed abundantly in Christ. We are rich; not just like a millionaire, but like a Billionaire.
* However, sometimes we behave like beggars, or stingy people, who think they have no blessings from God at all.
* We need to realize how much God has blessed us and live happy, generous lives like spiritual billionaires.

2-3, What does he mean by ‘every spiritual blessing in Christ’? (3b)

* ‘Every spiritual blessing in Christ’ reminds us of Colossians 1:15-20,

“The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. **16** For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. **17** He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. **18** And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. **19** For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, **20** and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

* But Paul emphasizes that every spiritual blessing has been given in Christ; they need nothing more.
* When we feel in want, we should realize more deeply that God has already given us every spiritual blessing in Christ instead of looking elsewhere.
* There may be spiritual blessings as well as material blessings. People usually praise God when receiving material blessings.
* However spiritual blessings truly satisfy our souls. They are most valuable. God has given us every spiritual blessing in Christ.

2-4, With what purpose did God choose us? (4a)

***For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight.***

* It is incredible and unbelievable. God chose us even before the creation of the world.

John 15:16 says,

“You did not choose me, but I chose you.”

* We became chosen people by God’s one-sided grace. God chose us before the creation of the world.
* We did not volunteer to become God’s chosen people. God chose us according to his eternal plan. It is not a burden but a great privilege.

Ephesians 1:11 says,

“In 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,”

* God chose us with a clear purpose according to his eternal plan. This is truly amazing grace that God has given to us.
* We were not chosen by a random chance based on random fishing on campus but by God’s clear plan.
* The purpose of calling was to make us holy and blameless in his sight. God chose us to make us a holy nation, serving his eternal will and purpose.

* Paul knew that it was a great blessing to be chosen by God. He said in 1 Timothy 1:15

“Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners-of whom I am the worst.”

He also said in 1Co 15:9-10,

“For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them-yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me.”

* Humanly speaking, Paul deserved to be killed and was not qualified to be chosen because he was the worst of sinners, persecuting many Christians and putting them to death.
* But to our surprise he became God’s chosen instrument for the Gentiles. By the grace of God he was chosen.
* God’s grace motivated him to work harder than anyone else. Due to the grace of Jesus, he worked hard for Jesus’ name.
* Abraham in Genesis was a useless, helpless, childless, and hopeless 75-year old man. But God chose him to become the father of faith for all believers.
* He was the least likely person to be chosen. But God chose him and Abraham obeyed God’s calling and became a great nation and a source of blessing for all mankind.
* That’s why God said to him in Genesis 17:1, “I am God Almighty, walk before faithfully and be blameless.”
* Praise the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who chose each of us in the same way to be holy and be blameless before His eyes!

2-5, How did we become his children? (4b, 5)

***In Love he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will—***

* Some people might have trouble when they hear the word “predestined.”
* But when we consider the words “In love”, we come to understand that predestination is not a fate but an act of God’s love.
* This knowledge leads us to pursue a holy life. We can rest assured that after we have done our very best to serve God’s sheep, we can entrust the matter into the hands of the Lord.
* This does not nullify incentive for evangelism and missions. We do not know who the elect and the non-elect are, so we must continue to spread the word to all people.
* Our efforts to evangelize is God moving to bring the elect to salvation.

John 6:37 and 44 reads,

“All those the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away.”

“No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them, and I will raise them up at the last day.”

* Next, let’s think about the word, ‘adoption’.
* This adoption is a legal term. This adoption is possible through Jesus Christ.
* In the movie, “***Ben-Hur(1959)***”, the main actor, Charlton Heston plays a Palestinian Jew, named Judah. Judah was a man battling the Roman empire at the time of Christ. His actions sent him and his family into slavery, but an encounter with the Roman Consul, changed his life. The Roman Consul, Quintas Arias, jumped into the sea, wanting to commit suicide, because he sensed that he had lost his battle. Judah jumped in and rescued him. Finally, news came that Rome won the battle. Consul Arias adopted Judah as his son. Suddenly, misfortune turned into great privilege as the son of the Roman consul. Heston finally meets his rival in a justly famous chariot race and rescues his suffering family. However the most significant part of the film is an inspirational encounter with Jesus that changes everything. Through this personal encounter, Judah realizes the sins of hatred, revenge, and bitterness in his heart and receives Jesus’ sin forgiveness. He was then adopted into the family of God, thanks to Jesus who died on the cross.
* Likewise once adopted as a son, he will enjoy all the privileges as the son - 1) become a member of the family of God, 2) become an heir with Christ (Romans 8:17), 3) and imitate Jesus Christ (Romans 8:29).
* Once we were not God’s children, lost in our sins and rebellion. But God adopted us as his sons through faith in Jesus. Now we can call “Abba Father” and enjoy all the spiritual blessings as his sons.

2-6, Why does Paul praise God all the more? (6)

***to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. “***

* Throughout this passage the words “through Jesus Christ” or “in him” or “in Christ” is repeated.
* We praise God all the more for his glorious grace. We praise Him for His abundant love in and through Jesus Christ!

1. Read verses 7-10. How are we redeemed? (7, 8a) What is the mystery of God’s will? ( 7, 8a) How was the mystery of God’s will made known to us? (8b, 9) When will the mystery of God’s will put into effect and what will happen? (10)

3-1, Read verses 7-10.

**7** In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God’s grace **8** that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and understanding, **9** he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, **10** to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment—to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ.

3-2, How are we redeemed? (7, 8a)

***In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God’s grace 8 that he lavished on us.***

* Redemption means to buy back, especially out of slavery. When we are free, we do not appreciate how precious our freedom is.
* But when we lose it, like prisoners of war(POW) or when we are put in prison due to violating the law, we really come to appreciate our freedom.
* The Bible says we were slaves of sin. We did not do what we wanted to do, but we did what we hated to do.
* Even though we hated it, we could not stop doing it.
* Many young people are addicted to drugs or video games. Even though they fail in their school studies, they cannot stop playing video games.
* Others are slaves of lustful desires, alcohol or drugs. Some are slaves of anger, bitterness or hatred.
* Some have a chronic habit of holding grudges, and this imprisons them. How can we get out of such bondage that ruins our lives?
* To be redeemed requires a price. The price is not money or community service, but life, for the wages of sin is death.
* So we have to die in order to pay the price of sin. People think that sin is enjoyable. They think they can enjoy sin as they please and then escape from it.
* But when we try to escape from it, we find that we are trapped by Satan.
* Verse 7 says we have redemption through his blood. In order to redeem us Jesus shed his blood on the cross.

Leviticus 17:11 says,

“For the life of a creature is in the blood...the blood...makes atonement for one’s life.”

Hebrews 9:22 says.

“In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.”

* This looked forward to Jesus’ blood. Jesus was the sinless Son of God. His blood has power to satisfy God’s righteousness and to cleanse our sin-stained blood. Jesus’ blood brings us forgiveness of sins once for all.

Hebrews 10:8-14 reads,

**“**First he said, “Sacrifices and offerings, burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not desire, nor were you pleased with them”—though they were offered in accordance with the law. **9** Then he said, “Here I am, I have come to do your will.” He sets aside the first to establish the second. **10** And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. **11** Day after day every priest stands and performs his religious duties; again and again he offers the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. **12** But when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, **13** and since that time he waits for his enemies to be made his footstool. **14** For by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.”

* In this way, God redeemed us in order to adopt us as his children.
* He did this in love, and in accordance with the riches of his grace that he lavished on us (7b-8a)
* Praise Jesus Christ who became the lamb of God on the cross to redeem us from our sins and eternal condemnation!

3-3, What is the mystery of God’s will? (8b,9)

* The mystery of his will is God’s plan of world salvation fulfilled through Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 6:19-20 reads,

“Pray also for me, that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, 20 for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.”

Romans 16:25-27 reads,

“Now to him who is able to establish you in accordance with my gospel, the message I proclaim about Jesus Christ, in keeping with the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past, 26 but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all the Gentiles might come to the obedience that comes from faith— 27 to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen.”

1 Corinthians 2:7-8 reads,

“No, we declare God’s wisdom, a mystery that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began. 8 None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.”

Colossians 1:25-27 reads,

“I have become its servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness— 26 the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the Lord’s people. 27 To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.”

Colossians 2:1-4 reads,

“I want you to know how hard I am contending for you and for those at Laodicea, and for all who have not met me personally. 2 My goal is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, 3 in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. 4 I tell you this so that no one may deceive you by fine-sounding arguments.”

Colossians 4:3 reads,

“And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains.”

3-4, How was the mystery of God’s will made known to us? (8b,9)

***With all wisdom and understanding, 9 he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ,***

* With all wisdom and understanding

3-5, When will the mystery of God’s will put into effect and what will happen? (10)

***10 to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment—to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ.***

* It was hidden in the past. It is revealed clearly both to the Jews and the Gentiles alike when God’s appointed time came.
* The blueprint of God’s salvation plan is to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ.

Ephesians 3:6 says,

“This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus.”

* In this world, there are so many distinctions made between people based on conflicts between countries, tribes, and communities.
* These kinds of conflicts happen even within the church. How can people be united? With human beings, it is impossible. But with God, it is possible.
* God brings unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ. Christ is the center of spiritual gravity which draws all things together and unites them.

1. Read verses 11 - 14. How were we chosen? (11) What was the purpose of his will? (12) What happened to the Ephesian believers when they heard the message of truth? (13a) What else happened to them when they believed? (13b) What does the Holy Spirit do for them? (14) What can we learn from this passage?

4-1, Read verses 11-14.

**11** In 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, **12** in order that we, who were the first to put our hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory. **13** And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, **14** who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God’s possession—to the praise of his glory.

4-2, How were we chosen? (11)

***In 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,***

* We were chosen in him, according to the plan of him who works everything in conformity with the purpose of his will.

4-3, What was the purpose of his will? (12)

***12 in order that we, who were the first to put our hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory.***

* Paul explains in verses 11-14 that God gave the same blessing and had the same purpose in salvation for both the Jews and the Gentiles.
* But chronologically, first it was given to the Jews and then to the Gentiles. In verses 11-12 the pronoun “we” refers to the Jews, including Paul himself.

4-4, What happened to the Ephesian believers when they heard the message of truth? (13a)

***13 And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation.***

* In verses 13-14 the pronoun “you” refers to the Gentile believers.
* Paul expounds in verses 13-14 how the Gentiles were brought into God’s blessing and how they can be sure of it.

4-5, What else happened to them when they believed? (13b)

***When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit,***

4-6, What does the Holy Spirit do for them? (14)

***14 who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God’s possession—to the praise of his glory.***

* In order to explain this, he talks about the role of the Holy Spirit. It was hard for the Gentile believers to accept that they were also God’s possession, like the Jews.
* But Paul explains that when they believed, they were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit.
* The Holy Spirit’s presence in our lives is the guarantee that we are God’s children.

2 Corinthians 1:21b-22 says,

“He anointed us, set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.”

* Here “deposit” is like a down-payment. This deposit validates that the purchase has been made.
* In the same way, the Holy Spirit confirms that all of God’s blessings have been poured out upon us, and we will receive our full inheritance in the kingdom of God.
* Verse 3a says, “Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” Verse 6 says, “...to the praise of his glorious grace.” Verses 12 and 14 repeat the phrase, “to the praise of his glory,” referring to Jew and Gentile respectively.
* This tells us God’s purpose in redemption. In the past we were objects of God’s wrath and grieved God due to our sins.
* But God redeemed us through Jesus Christ to restore God’s image in us so that we might be for the praise of his glory.
* Now when God sees us he finds pleasure in us and takes delight in us. Wow! We are redeemed to the praise of God’s glory.
* To people we may be nobodies; but to God we are very special. By the same token, this gives us purpose to bring praise and glory to God.
* Why do we have to bring praise and glory to God, and not to ourselves? God wants us to be God-centered, making everything about himself.
* This is right. For in fact, God is worthy of all praise, honor and glory. God is the Creator, Savior, and Sovereign Ruler over all things.
* If we do not bring praise and glory to God, our thinking becomes futile and our foolish hearts are darkened.
* Then we will give praise and glory to lesser things, such as mortal human beings, birds, animals, and reptiles (Ro 1:21-23).
* We will become idol-worshipers. Also, we become proud, corrupt and miserable. God wants us to maintain God’s blessing by giving praise, glory and honor to God.
* When we do there is harmony in God’s creation. But if each created thing wants to glorify itself most, there will be disunity and chaos.
* When people gather and have a conversation, if each one brags about himself, what happens? They become tired, angry, dissatisfied, and upset, until there is great disharmony and conflict.
* But when each one brings honor and glory to God, they can be encouraged and strengthened and enjoy unity in God. That is why we have to accept God’s purpose for us to bring praise and glory to God.

4-7, What can we learn from this passage?

* Personal application
* After contemplating all the blessings God has given us through Christ who is God’s mystery, we are compelled to be evangelists by obeying Jesus’ command. (Matthew 28:18)

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

**Conclusion**

We have learned that God has given us every spiritual blessing in Christ. He chose us and predestined us to be adopted to sonship. He redeemed us through the blood of Christ, forgiving all our sins. He revealed the mystery of his will. He guaranteed our inheritance in heaven with the deposit of the Holy Spirit. He redeemed us to the praise of his glory. Thinking of all this, we cannot but praise God. Praise God.

**One word: Every Spiritual Blessing in Christ!**