

Paul's Letter to the ***EPHESIANS***

CHAPTERS 1, 2, 3: *God's Plan for Everyone Who is In Christ* (CONTINUED)

Benefits of Being "In Christ" (1:3 – 3:21)

God's Master Plan for Salvation

Note the harmonious work of the Trinity: Father (3-6), Son (7-12) and Holy Spirit (13-14), in the work of salvation: Father/Election, Son/Redemption and Holy Spirit/Protection.

Election (Past) (1:3-6)

1:3 Praise⁷ 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. [⁷*eulogetos*: one deserving of commendation]

God is "worthy of praise" ² Samuel 22:4, Psalm 96:4-6, Revelation 5:6-15, because He has abundantly blessed all of the saints ² Corinthians 9:8, James 1:17-18, 2 Peter 1:3-4. The main emphasis of this verse is not on the spiritual blessings, which can be material or immaterial, but on God the Father, who is the divine/spiritual source of all blessings. The incredible blessings are only available to those who are "in Christ", and they are God's children and "co-heirs with Christ" ^{Romans 8:16-17}.

The words in this verse translated as "praise", "blessed" and "blessing" all come from the same Greek root word where we get our English word "eulogy" (a speech/writing of praise).

1:4-6 For he chose us in him before the creation of the world⁸ to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined⁹ us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will – to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the (One he loves)¹⁰. [⁸*kosmos*: sum total of the material universe, ⁹*proorizo*: to determine before (lit),

¹⁰*agapao*: someone who is loved with great compassion] The principle of God choosing His people is surely established throughout Scripture ^{Deuteronomy 7:6, Romans 8:29-30, Revelation 17:14},

but his election does not happen independently from or negate man's responsibility to accept Jesus as Lord and Savior ^{Matthew 3:1-2, 4:17}. However, genuine believers are unquestionably holy and blameless only because of the imputed righteousness of Jesus ² Corinthians 5:21, Philippians 3:7-9.

For God & His children, love is the divine motive for all Godly action ^{Deuteronomy 7:7-8, Luke 10:25-28}.

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God adopts saints into His family as sons ^{Romans 8:16-17, Galatians 4:4-7}, and the ultimate purpose of election to salvation is the glorification of God ^{Romans 15:5-6, Philippians 1:9-11}. Toward the end of the passage, the "which" refers to "his glorious grace", given to man through Jesus. ^{Romans 5:20-21}

It seems that God's "choosing" and His "calling" may be separate issues ^{2 Thessalonians 2:13-14}, and there are verses that appear to imply some who are chosen may not be saved ^{2 Timothy 2:10}. Nevertheless, saints can take no credit and rest completely upon the completed work of God.

Redemption (Present) (1:7-10)

1:7-8 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us with all wisdom ¹¹ and understanding ¹²,

[¹¹*sophia*: knowing the heart of things, ¹²*phronesis*: knowledge leading to right action]

The redemption of man ^{Psalms 130:7, Romans 3:21-26}; payment of the required ransom ^{1 Corinthians 6:20} (Christ's blood ^{Leviticus 17:11, Revelation 5:8-9}) for the release from the slavery of sin ^{Romans 6:15-18}.

Redemption provided "the full rights of [God's] sons" ^{Galatians 4:4-5}, unlimited grace ^{Romans 5:20-21}, unlimited forgiveness ^{Colossians 2:13-15}, "eternal" security ^{Hebrews 9:12} and unlimited spiritual "wisdom and understanding" ^{1 Corinthians 2:6-16, John 14:25-26}.

1:9-10 And he made known to us the mystery ¹³ of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times ¹⁴ will have reached their fulfillment – to bring all things in heaven and on earth ¹⁵ together under one head, even Christ. [¹³*mysterion*: sacred thing hidden which is naturally unknown to human reason, ¹⁴*kairos*: opportune/appropriate time, ¹⁵*ge*: part of creation which denotes man's domain] God seeks man first ^{John 6:44-45}, reveals the "mystery" of His salvation plan ^{Romans 16:25-27} and His plan for Jesus ^{John 8:12-29}, then man is able to pursue a relationship with Jesus ^{Matthew 6:33}. The bringing "all things...together under...Christ" at the "fulfillment" of the "times" refers to the Millennial Kingdom ^{Revelation 20:1-6} (after destruction of the world's systems ^{Revelation 17-18} and the Second Coming ^{Revelation 19:11-21}) and to the Eternal Kingdom (the New Heaven, New Earth and New Jerusalem ^{Revelation 21:1-2} that will follow the Great White Throne Judgement ^{Revelation 20:11-15}).

Christians are blessed by God with the answers to many of His mysteries. He has "entrusted the secret things" to the "servants of Christ" ^{1 Corinthians 4:1-2}; however, these facts will not be revealed to the majority of the Jews until the time of the Rapture of the Church ^{Romans 11:25}.

In the meantime, the angels are curious and "long to look into these things" ^{1 Peter 1:10-12}.

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Inheritance (Future) (1:11-14)

1:11-12 In him we were also chosen ¹⁶, having been predestined according to the plan of him who (works out) ¹⁷ everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, in order that we, who were the first to hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory. [¹⁶*kleroo*: made heirs, ¹⁷*energeo*: to effect by action] Believers receive a divine inheritance ^{Romans 8:16-17, Hebrews 1:14} when they become God's children through Christ, because He completes everything He starts ^{Philippians 1:4-6} by His sovereign will ^{v.6, Romans 12:2, Philippians 2:12-13}. For emphasis, Paul made the following point again: God's glory is the supreme purpose of redemption. ^{v.6, Philippians 1:9-11, Revelation 5:6-12}

God will is the ultimate determining force in all of life ^{Exodus 33:19, Romans 8:28, 9:18}, and has a powerful part in every aspect of salvation ('choosing', 'predestination', etc). ^{Romans 8:29-30}

The Bible seems to indicate there are two types of inheritances: (1) an inheritance by birth that is unconditional and automatic ^{Galatians 4:6-7} and (2) an inheritance that is conditional upon a believers faithfulness, obedience and perseverance ^{Colossians 3:23-24, Hebrews 6:10-12} (example lost inheritances in the OT: Moses ^{Deuteronomy 4:21-22}, Esau ^{Hebrews 12:16-17}; in the NT ^{1 Corinthians 3:10-15}).

1:13-14 And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word ¹⁸ of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were (marked in him with a seal) ¹⁹, the promised ²⁰ Holy Spirit, who is a (deposit guaranteeing) ²¹ our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession – to the praise of his glory. [¹⁸*logos*: word as the expression of intelligence, ¹⁹*sphragizo*: to stamp with a private mark for security or preservation, ²⁰*epaggelia*: a legal term denoting an assurance to undertake to do something, ²¹*arrabon*: earnest money] The principle of man's free will ('sovereignty') is clearly defined in God's Word ^{Deuteronomy 30:19-20, Hebrews 4:11}. Here Paul points out that man must "hear" ^{Romans 10:17} and "believe" ^{John 3:16, 6:29, 11:25-27} the "word of truth, the gospel" ^{Colossians 1:3-5}, then faith ^{Ephesians 2:8-9} will save him. The gift of the "Spirit of Jesus Christ" ^{Philippians 1:19} produces a seal ^{Ephesians 4:30} that guarantees ^{2 Corinthians 5:5} eternal security of salvation ^{John 14:15-17}, as well as God's ownership of the saints ^{1 Corinthians 7:23}.

In Summary

Each person "In Christ" is blessed ^{v.3}, chosen ^{v.4,11}, predestined ^{v.5}, adopted ^{v.5}, accepted ^{v.6}, redeemed ^{v.7}, forgiven ^{v.7}, enlightened ^{v.8-9}, sealed ^{v.13}, given an inheritance ^{v.14} and assured ^{v.14}.