



# THE COMMUNITY

## To the Praise of His Glory | OUR SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS IN CHRIST

### What Do I Need to Know About the Passage?

Ephesians 1:1-14

When someone dies his or her heir inherits all that belonged to them. When we place our faith in Christ, who died for our sin, we inherit all of the blessings that were the privileged possession of the Son. We are adopted as God's sons and daughters and made heirs. This passage uncovers the great riches that are now ours because we belong to Christ.

#### Ephesians 1:3

Paul begins this letter by giving praise to God for what He has done in saving us, and bestowing upon us "every spiritual blessing in Christ." Verse 3 functions as a sort of topic sentence for this passage as well as for the whole book. The next 11 verses go on to describe what these great blessings are. It's much like being at the reading of a will, knowing we are the heirs of a great estate. What follows is a description of the inheritance we have received. Verses 3-14 are actually one gigantic run-on sentence in Greek. When Paul was excited he got a little carried away and this is one of those times. But it's not hard to see why. Just pause for a second and consider what he is saying is ours in Christ.

#### Ephesians 1:4-8

First, we were chosen before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in His sight. Before we were ever born, and with His full knowledge that we'd rebel against Him, He determined to make us holy, no matter what it would cost Him. Second, He predestined us to be adopted into His family. We are His sons and daughters. My wife and I adopted our little girl, Sadie. She is the best, sweetest, prettiest little thing. We are absolutely in love with her. Having been adopted by us she is in every meaningful sense our daughter. Everything we own is hers. Our house is her house. Our food is her food. We take her on vacation, buy her presents, and we're going to pay her tuition. Because she is ours, everything we have is hers. The same sort of transaction happens when we trust Christ. God adopts us and we become uniquely His. While many people might refer to God as Father, this is only really true of those who have received Christ. But sometimes we can forget that we have the rights of sons and daughters and instead live as orphans. We have incredible riches in Christ, but we act like we're poor.

This adoption speaks not only of privilege but also of the security of our salvation.

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### What's the Big Idea?

The moment we trusted Christ we inherited a great deal of spiritual riches and blessings, all of which were purchased for us by Christ. This study surveys the great riches we now have because we are in Christ and the glory that is His due.

### What's the Problem?

Although God has given us lavish blessings and adopted us into His family, we often live as spiritual orphans trying to find meaning, love and purpose apart from Him.

## To the Praise of His Glory | Our Spiritual Blessings In Christ

While there are many things we can do to hinder our fellowship with God, we cannot change our relationship. We will always be His children by virtue of our adoption into His family. By the way, I don't think Paul intended to teach on predestination in this passage – he just kind of assumes it. However, it tends to get people's attention so don't be surprised if it becomes a tangent in your study. That's not a bad thing at all, just don't let it take you too far off course. It's clear from this and other passages that God is the initiator in our salvation. It's also clear that we are culpable for our sin and responsible to believe (and preach) the gospel. If it seems to be a distraction in your group you might offer to do a little research and cover it more fully another week.

Next, we have redemption. To redeem someone was to purchase them out of slavery. God has purchased us from slavery to sin and spiritual death with the blood of His Son. The result of this payment is that all our sins, past, present, and future have been forgiven. These aren't meager gifts, nor were we given just enough to get by. Rather, they were done in accordance with the riches of God's grace that He lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding. Praise His glorious grace.

### Ephesians 1:9-12

In addition to the blessings related directly to our salvation we were also given great insights. To the non-Christian, the meaning of human life and human history are unknowable: Why we are here, where we came from, and where we are going are profound mysteries. But to Christians, God has disclosed answers about these great questions.

In Ephesians 1:12, Paul explains that the purpose of our own lives is that we might live “for the praise of His glory.” This phrase is repeated several times in the passage so that we don't miss it. Christians know their ultimate purpose and meaning of their lives is to bring praise and glory to God. He has also revealed to us the ultimate meaning of history. It is to bring all things under the kingship of Jesus. The fact that He has chosen to do this by dying for lost sinners and lavishing grace upon them should only serve to bring Him praise.

The spread of the knowledge of the glory of God and the reign of Christ throughout the earth are the great purposes for which we are to live. Evangelism, prayer, and discipleship are crucial to this end as we seek to extend God's kingdom on this earth and speed history to its fulfillment.

### Ephesians 1:13-14

In verse 13, Paul underscores that all of these things became true, and are only true, when we trust Christ for our salvation.

The passage says that we are “sealed” in the Holy Spirit. The “seal” had several uses in the ancient world, two of which are very instructive as to what Paul meant in using the word. A seal was affixed to a document to guarantee its authenticity, and it was attached to goods in transit to guarantee protection. The Holy Spirit is the seal of the authenticity of our faith and a seal of protection, declaring we are God's personal and private possession.

In this last section, Paul addresses the security and assurance the Christian has that these things will all come to pass in their fullness. That security is connected to the indwelling Spirit of God, that acts as a down payment, assuring that the fullness of all of these truths will assuredly come to pass – to the praise of His glory.

## What's Our Response?

As students see these blessings laid out before them we want them to:

- Understand that the chief purpose for God's blessing us is to bring glory to Himself by making us holy and blameless in love.
- praise and thank God as they meditate on their many spiritual blessings.
- live in such a way as to bring God the greatest glory possible.

# Ephesians 1:1-14

## The Questions

Q: As you read through this passage, what jumps out as significant to you?

A: *Allow your group to discuss. Keep an open ear to what they saw in the passage.*

Q: In verse 3, Paul says we have been blessed with every spiritual blessing in Christ. What is a spiritual blessing? Why should anyone care about these?

A: *Spiritual blessings are key benefits that come to us only through our relationship with God through Jesus. One cannot have them apart from that.<sup>1</sup> The second question is crucial to answer. The Bible makes it clear there is an invisible spiritual component to our lives; we're not merely physical beings. Neglecting the spiritual component is to neglect something very important.*

Q: Paul lists so many spiritual blessings in this text. What are they and what do they mean?

A: *See the commentary on this passage for a list and explanation.*

Q: Key to understanding the Bible is understanding *why* God did/does these things for us. What does the passage say is his reasoning?

A: *Guide them toward verses 4-6. Here, we want them to understand that God's three motivations are 1. His love for us, 2. It was his good pleasure and will to do these things, and 3. It will result in His glory.*

Q: Of all the blessings in this passage, which one resonates most with you? Share why!

A: *This would be a great opportunity for each member of the group to share.*

Q: If all these blessings are ours when we become Christians, why does our spiritual life often feel less than stellar?

A: *Read Ephesians 4:15-16 (ESV). We are growing, learning how to live a new life as a Christian. This is a process and a lifetime endeavor.*

Q: Which one of these blessings will you think on and remind yourself all week? How?

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gotquestions.org/spiritual-blessings.html>