

TO THE PRAISE OF HIS GLORY [PART 1]

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Ephesians 1:3-14,

"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, 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 5 He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, 6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. 7 In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace 8 which He lavished on us. In all wisdom and insight 9 He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him 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 11 also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will, 12 to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ would be to the praise of His glory. 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, 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."

- ***After reading through this passage, if you did not know that it was part of a letter, but had heard it read or sung in church, what would you think it was?***

Paul usually begins his letters with an introductory thanksgiving, which focuses on God's work in the lives of his readers (Romans 1:8; 1 Corinthians 1:4; Philippians 1:3; Colossians 1:3 etc...). Here, in Ephesians however, the opening paragraph is an outburst of praise to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS:

First, it is necessary to note that in the Greek text these verses serve as one sentence. They are a Grammar teacher's worst nightmare as they serve as one very long run on sentence. In our English texts they are broken down into smaller sections or sentences at the logical shifts in thought.

Second, it is necessary to note the three-part structure of this passage of praise.

- ***What key phrase does Paul repeat in this passage and how does it affect the structure of the passage?***

Notice that the phrase "*to the praise of His glory*" appears three times in this passage (vs. 6, 12, & 14). This phrase separates Paul's praise into three smaller sections of praise. The phrase follows each section and emphasizes the ultimate cause and goal of the believer's spiritual blessings, as the glory of God.

- ***Who does each section of praise focus on?***

Verses 3-6: Praise to the Father! (For Choosing and Adopting us)

Verses 7-12: Praise to the Son! (For Redeeming us)

Verses 13-14: Praise to the Spirit! (For Sealing us)

- ***What other ways can this passage of praise be outlined or broken down?***

God's Work in the Past (Verses 3-6) [Election & Adoption]

God's Work in the Present (Verses 7-10) [Redemption]

God's Work in the Future (Verses 11-14) [Giving us an Inheritance]

Third, it is necessary to note that these verses are clearly God-centered as they describe the blessings of God from the standpoint of God's pleasure, God's purposes, God's provisions, God's grace, God's will and God's glory.

- ***What other phrase do you see that occurs frequently in verses 3-14?***
- ***What does verse 3 say the Father has done for us?***

The term "***blessed***" is a compound word. It comes from the words "*to speak*" and "*well*." It literally means, "*to speak well of*." It is the term that we get our English word "*eulogy*" from. It means, "*to praise or commend*" and refers to God's kindness to us as well as the appreciation or thanks we express back to Him. Who better to eulogize than God. In Ephesians 1:3-14, Paul is offering up a supreme eulogy, an offering of praise to God.

Notice that Paul is Blessing God (*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*), Because God has Blessed us (*Who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing*) so that we might in turn Bless God (*to the praise of His glorious grace*).

- ***Who is the Blessor?***
 - James 1:17, "*Every good thing bestowed and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from **the Father of lights**.*"
- ***Who is the Blessed?***
 - Ephesians 1:1, "*to the **saints**...who are **faithful** in Christ Jesus.*"
 - Galatians 3:9, "*so then those who are **of faith** are blessed.*"
 - Psalms 32:1-2, "*How blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, Whose sin is covered! How blessed is the man to whom the Lord does not impute iniquity...*"
- ***What is the Blessing?***
 - 2 Peter 1:3, "*seeing that His divine power has granted to us **everything pertaining to life and godliness**, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.*"

The term *spiritual* means, "*pertaining to or belonging to the Spirit.*" Paul is praising God for our spiritual blessings.

The phrase *in the heavenly places* refers to the realm of God's heavenly domain from which all His blessings come, cf. James 1:17. (For further study note the significance of Ephesians 1:20; 2:6).

The phrase *in Christ* emphasizes that we are blessed as believers because we have been placed in a marvelous union with Christ

- **List the blessings that Paul names in the rest of the passage:**

Verse 4:

Verse 5:

Verse 6:

Verse 7:

Verse 9:

Verses 11-12:

Verses 13-14:

Over the next few weeks we will take time to examine the spiritual blessings mentioned in this passage of praise that God has blessed us with so that we might be motivated to do as Paul does and Praise God for His wonderful work.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION:

As we have begun to examine Paul's outburst of praise in Ephesians 1:3-14 answer the following questions.

- *Is there a specific response that you would like to make to 1:3-14?*

- *Do you ever find it difficult to praise God in prayer, especially for more than a minute at a time? If so why? How can you overcome those obstacles?*

- *How can you praise God in Prayer? Take time to praise God in prayer before you leave!*