

The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Ephesians

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CHAPTER TWO -

THE BELIEVER'S POSITION IN THE GRACE OF GOD

Ephesians 1, verse 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."

The statement "**in Christ Jesus**" (or the same statement expressed in other words) appears fourteen times in the first chapter of Ephesians. "**In Christ Jesus**" is the key that unlocks this storehouse of spiritual blessings. "**In Christ Jesus**" is the key that opens the door and permits us to look into the storehouse of this Epistle.

Every believer, every born again child of God is "**in Christ Jesus**" because he has been baptized by the HOLY SPIRIT into the Body of CHRIST (I Corinthians 12:12-13). Because we are in CHRIST JESUS we share all Heaven's spiritual blessings with CHRIST JESUS. Paul makes the same statement in other words in Philippians 4:19: "**But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.**"

In the eighth chapter of Romans we learn that we are the children of GOD. We have the witness of The HOLY SPIRIT that we are the children of GOD, and because we are His children we are heirs of GOD and joint-heirs with the Lord JESUS, our Saviour (Romans 8:14-17).

What GOD's storehouse contains in CHRIST JESUS, only eternity will reveal. Certainly the finite mind of man cannot conceive of the spiritual blessings (and the physical blessings) contained in GOD's mighty storehouse - but it is only in CHRIST JESUS that we can claim these supplies as we need them, spiritually and physically.

What is ours "**in Christ Jesus**" now? What is our present standing, our present riches, our present power, is known only in part. We know we are the children of GOD, we know He can supply our need. We know He will never leave us nor forsake us - but these finite minds and our limited faith cannot conceive the fullness of the blessing that rests upon us now as we sit together in heavenly places in CHRIST JESUS.

Verse 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.**"

In the language of the Bible, Ephesians 1:3-14 is one sentence . . . the longest sentence in the

Word of GOD. There is a reason for this: Into these verses is woven the most thrilling account of spiritual blessings and provisions revealed in the Word of GOD. There is no place for a period in this account, because three Persons are involved. They are inseparable, both in their being and in their activity as having to do with our salvation. Therefore, Ephesians 1:3-14 is one great sentence, describing the one great provision made for hell-deserving sinners.

Referring back to verse 3 for just a moment, we note the verse opens with "**Blessed**," which means literally, "well spoken of." Certainly as we think of the gracious wonders and the indescribable love that made possible for us the redemption provided by GOD our Father, we must of necessity speak well of GOD who so loved us that He gave His only begotten Son that we (hell-deserving sinners) might be saved.

In our testimonies we thank the Lord JESUS for saving us, and we thank the HOLY SPIRIT for leading us. Certainly JESUS is to be thanked for saving us, and the HOLY SPIRIT is to be praised; but Paul adds "**And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement**" (Romans 5:11).

It is true that JESUS died on the Cross, and we have redemption through His Blood. It is in CHRIST JESUS that we rest, saved by His grace. But never forget it was GOD the Father who so loved sinners that He by His grace (Hebrews 2:9) permitted JESUS to die the horrible, indescribable death He died that we might be saved!

The virgin birth is clearly taught in verse 3 of our present chapter. GOD IS the GOD and the Father of our Lord JESUS CHRIST, despite what some of the modern bishops and "religious fathers" have had to say about JESUS being just an ordinary man. He was born of a virgin - but GOD Almighty was His Father, and the Blood of Almighty GOD ran through the veins of JESUS (Acts 20:28).

GOD the Father, GOD the SON, and GOD the Spirit are all three in these verses. Their work is unfolded in verses 4 through 14 of chapter one. GOD the Father planned and was the Originator of every spiritual blessing. All spiritual blessings are ours (if we are believers) in CHRIST, by Whom we were redeemed. All spiritual blessings are Spirit-bestowed. GOD's blessings in the Spirit come only as we yield fully to the leadership of the HOLY SPIRIT. If we refuse to be led by the Spirit, we cannot hope to share the blessings of the Spirit.

The statement "**in heavenly places**" is used five times in the Ephesian letter. It is found only one other time in the Scriptures. JESUS said, "**If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you OF HEAVENLY THINGS?**" (John 3:12). Here JESUS was instructing a very religious Pharisee who needed to be born from above.

The origin of all spiritual blessings is "**in heavenly places**." Why?

- Because our Heavenly Father is in the heavenlies (Matthew 7:11).
- From there our Saviour came (John 6:33).
- The HOLY SPIRIT came from the heavenlies (Acts 2:2-4).

Above all other reasons, the Lord JESUS CHRIST is there now! When He had by Himself

purged our sins, He ascended back to the Father, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty, and He is there today to make intercession for us (Hebrews 1:1-3).

"For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (I Timothy 2:5).

JESUS the man - not the Spirit, not a mystic - but THE MAN, is in Heaven now, seated now on the right hand of GOD the Father, interceding and mediating for all saints in CHRIST JESUS.

If we are born again, our spiritual life is **"in Him"** (I John 5:11). Therefore, every spiritual blessing comes through HIM.

Believers are strangers and pilgrims on this earth. This is not our home. Our citizenship is in Heaven. Believers are identified with Christ:

- (a) In nature (II Peter 1:4).
- (b) In life (Colossians 3:4; I John 5:12).
- (c) In relationship (John 20:17; Hebrews 2:11).
- (d) In service (John 17:18; Matthew 28:20).
- (e) In suffering (Philippians 1:29; Romans 8:17; Colossians 1:24).
- (f) In inheritance (Romans 8:16-17).
- (g) In future glory (Romans 8:18-21; I Peter 2:9; Revelation 1:6; Revelation 5:10).

Born again believers are heavenly citizens. We are a heavenly people, we are definitely strangers on this earth (Hebrews 3:1; I Peter 2:11).

The Lord JESUS CHRIST, our Saviour, has been victorious - not only on earth, but in the heavenlies. He conquered the world, the flesh, and the devil, death, hell and the grave. He has the key to death and hell. **"ALL POWER IS GIVEN UNTO ME IN HEAVEN AND IN EARTH!"** (Matthew 28:18). Today JESUS is in Heaven. Today JESUS is exercising Himself in our behalf, supplying our needs while we remain on earth. In John 17 JESUS prayed, making it clear that He was not asking the Heavenly Father to take us out of the earth, but to take care of us while we remain on earth.

There is a tremendous spiritual truth that needs to be learned by many professing Christians. Some are born again, while others are deceived. The truth to which I refer is set forth in I John 4:4:

"Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world."

Were it not for the fact that JESUS lives today, seated at the right hand of the Father to intercede for us, spiritual life on this earth would be an impossibility. We live in a non-spiritual atmosphere. We live in a world that is steeped in sin. The whole world **"lieth in wickedness."** Therefore, if we were not literally connected to the heavenly Man who makes intercession for us and pleads our case before a holy GOD, it would be impossible for us to live a spiritual life on this earth. In Him **"we live and move and have our being."**

- In CHRIST we have salvation.
- In CHRIST we have strength to live a Christian life.
- In CHRIST we overcome Satan.
- In CHRIST our needs are all supplied.

Divers go below the surface of the ocean; but they carry air with them. Man cannot live under water except he be supplied with air from earth. Thus, man born of GOD cannot live a spiritual life without a constant supply of Heaven-sent grace, strength, power and blessing.

The song-writer expresses it in these words:

"Moment by moment I'm kept in His love,
Moment by moment I've life from above."

Yes, we could say, "second by second," and then break it down to "split-second by split-second we have life from above" - because if JESUS withdrew His power and His grace for one split second, we could not stand . . . we surely would fall! I am so glad that **"if God be for us, who can be against us?"** (Romans 8:31).

The term **"all spiritual blessings"** does not mean just spiritual blessings - but literally means "Spirit-bestowed blessings." The grace of GOD provides our every need. There is no need too small or too insignificant for the Heavenly Father to see. His concern reaches our utmost need. GOD's love assures us that He will, through JESUS, **"FREELY GIVE US ALL THINGS"** (Romans 8:32). GOD's promise is **"EVERY NEED SUPPLIED"** (Philippians 4:19).

It pleased GOD the Father to reveal to Paul (through the HOLY GHOST) that all believers are saints . . . saints because all believers are in CHRIST (Colossians 1:27; 3:3). CHRIST was once dead but is now alive, was once on this earth but is now seated at the right hand of GOD the Father in the heavenlies - (not only in Heaven, but in **"heavenly places"**). To be in CHRIST includes all spiritual riches, all spiritual realities; and in Him is revealed all blessings afforded by the marvelous grace of GOD.

The only way any man can please GOD is in CHRIST JESUS.

GOD the Father has highly exalted His SON, and in the SON GOD is highly pleased. The reason? JESUS came into this world with a single eye, a single desire, a single motive, to do the sovereign will of GOD the Father. Therefore, GOD saves us for CHRIST's sake (Ephesians 4:32). GOD blesses us with all spiritual blessings in CHRIST JESUS, and **ONLY** in CHRIST JESUS. If you ever hear GOD the Father say, **"Well done, thou good and faithful servant,"** it will only be because you stand before GOD in Christ JESUS.

There is no pastor, minister, evangelist, teacher, preacher, priest, or pope who can confess you to GOD the Father! The one Mediator, the man CHRIST JESUS, must confess you to the Heavenly Father (I Timothy 2:5, I John 2:1-2, Matthew 10:32ff.). So, my precious reader, if you are not in CHRIST JESUS you are hopelessly lost and entirely cut off from GOD the Father! JESUS is the Alpha and the Omega. He is the first and the last. He is the Author and the Finisher of our faith.

He is the door to Heaven - and in His own words, "**No man cometh unto the Father but by me!**" (John 14:6).

JESUS is our Saviour. (Galatians 2:20).

- We are crucified with Christ
- We are resurrected to walk in newness of life (Romans 6:18).
- We walk in newness of life because we are a new creation in CHRIST (II Corinthians 5:17).
- Our access to GOD the Father in prayer is through our Lord JESUS CHRIST (Romans 8:26-27).
- Our strength for service is in the Lord JESUS CHRIST (Acts 17:28 and Hebrews 13:8).
- Our sufficiency in the hour of trial is in the Lord JESUS (I Peter 1:3-9).
- Our future glory is in the Lord JESUS CHRIST - and if we suffer with Him we will reign with Him; but if we deny Him He will also deny us (Romans 8:17).

In the Lord JESUS CHRIST ". . . **the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; ALL ARE YOURS; and ye are CHRIST's; and CHRIST is GOD's**" (I Corinthians 3:22-23). After reading such a statement, who could keep from saying, "Hallelujah! What a Saviour!"

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