

In Christ

Ephesians 1:3–12 (KJV)

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: (places: or, things. KJV margin note).

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:

⁵ having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,

⁶ to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved:

⁷ in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

⁸ wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence;

⁹ having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he had purposed in himself:

¹⁰ that in the dispensation of the fulness of times *he* might gather together in one all *things* in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; *even* in him:

¹¹ in whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all *things* after the counsel of his own will:

¹² that we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ:

Considerations

Have we thought about our being in Christ? What does it mean? What does it provide? Why has God placed us in Christ? We read that God has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places, in heavenly things, in Christ. As the Psalmist wrote in Psalm 8 a thousand years before Paul wrote this letter to the Ephesians, “What is man that thou are mindful of him?”

God created us and chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love. While God created us to be like him, other creatures he created did not approve of God creating us in him. They tried to get rid of us and caused us to fall through sin. But, God, chose us over them and provided the way, through Christ, that we would be back in rightful fellowship with him.

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Have we considered that we are, in a sense, a significant part of Scripture? What a blessing! Even though we fell from God's grace, in the beginning, Scripture shows how God worked to reinstall us in his grace, through Christ. Now, while we are at the center of God's plan, we should not be high-minded about it. We receive spiritual blessings, but it is because of Christ, and us being in Christ.

The spiritual blessings spoken of are all given to us "in Christ." All of them without exception are the purchase of his blood, the fruit of his petition, and the gifts of his grace. They, the spiritual blessings, are all treasured up in him, and when He was given to us, they were made available to us in him. All things are given to Christ first, as the head of the Body, and can be ours only as we are found in him.

Are we chosen? It is "in him." Are we predestinated to the adoption of children? It is "in him." Are we accepted? It is "in him." Are we forgiven? It is "in him." Are we brought into one body? It is "in him." Have we obtained inheritance? It is "in him." Are we sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, as the earnest of that inheritance? It is "in him." Are we blessed with all spiritual blessings? It is "in him," and in him alone! Oh, that we would be more mindful of our obligations to Christ about these things! How is it that anyone can read this passage and not see Christ, who is the all in all?

It started with the Father and is made available to us in Christ, because of the obedience of Jesus. He alone is faithful, doing the will of the Father, including death on the Cross for our sins! The whole of Scripture is about us being received back in the family of God, but it is not through our work, it is all through God's work made available to us who are in Christ.

For Us But In Him

I find it necessary to tell others that I am completely spoiled! Nothing I have done has warranted salvation from my sins and reconciliation to God. When I first realized I was lost and on my way to hell, I was soon relieved to find that my works could not save me, but Jesus' actions did. All I had to do was believe in him! In a state of sin, the gift of salvation is ours for the taking. All this is summarized in Ephesians, also.

Ephesians 2:8–9 (KJV)

⁸ For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God:

⁹ not of works, lest any *man* should boast.

We receive this gift, and cannot boast of works as the reason for the reward given despite our sinful life. As we read previously in verse 6, it is all "to the praise of the glory of his grace..." None of it is because of us, but it is all for us to the glory of God!

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God took us, who were created a little lower than the angels, who had sinned against God, to claim our position in Christ above those angels. Scripture tells us through Paul to the Corinthians, "Know ye not that we shall judge angels?" God is telling those angels that rebelled against Him, He is God, and there are none like Him. As a man, a gentile man now adopted into the family of God, in Christ, I say Amen! I am who I am because of my position in Christ, in spite of myself! It was for us, but it is not through us. It is all because of us in Christ.

We are made acceptable, holy, and without blame in Christ because God chose us before the foundation of the world! Man was created on the sixth day of creation. The creation of the world took place before the creation of man. God predestinated us in Christ before the foundation of the world had been set! Glorify God and do not think that you did anything to earn the salvation you have in Christ!

Salvation is all for those who believe in Jesus, and we have not earned it based on our merit. It's all pre-ordained by God and accomplished through His Son, Jesus the Christ. We have "redemption through the blood" and "forgiveness of sins" because of the richness of his grace, which we received through Christ and have access to because we are in Christ. It's for us, but we have done absolutely nothing to earn this grace and in fact, have caused God to provide the way in Christ because of our works. Because God so loved the world, he gave his only begotten Son that we may have eternal life. God choosing us is the love we read at the end of verse 4 of our passage. It also helps us to see how we are holy and without blame; It is because of our position in Christ. Everything that would make us unholy and everything that we would be held accountable for has been paid for by Jesus. We are as a result of being in Christ, holy, and without blame.

I find myself feeling as if I'm spoiled, even spoiled beyond measure! Because I have taken to heart the things Jesus did after the will of his Father, I have salvation and as we are seeing blessed beyond measure. All the things we have looked at are eternal and will remain with us, as long as we believe in Jesus. No one, neither God nor man, can remove us from the Body of Christ, as long as we believe in Jesus. It continues to get better!

Understanding The Will of God

We who believe are genuinely a group of people who have been blessed mightily by God to the point of finding it's just not possible for it to get any better. Meditate on the mercy of the Lord. Take the time to consider what he has done for us! When we do, nothing can stop us in our journey! However, if we feel it just can't get any better, we need to remember how, in verse 8, we read how he has abounded towards us even more! Here we see how we have wisdom and prudence provided to us. The wisdom of

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God and the understanding of the mystery of his will. How does he do this? Through His Word! God has set it in his heart to make known the mystery of his will. It was his pleasure to do this. God shows us that those in Christ, in the fullness of the dispensation of times, will be gathered together. It will not matter if we are dead or alive on earth. At the appointed time, which only he knows, we will be all joined together in a final, unique way, in Christ. You see, there is a point to being made here! As believers, we are in Christ, but we have not seen him yet. There is a principle of "already, but not yet" involved here. While we are in Christ, we are still on this earth, living in fleshly bodies of sin. We are not our flesh, but our soul and spirit. But the time will come when we will cast of this mortal body and put on immortality! There will be a point when we are completely and totally in Christ! Paul explains so much of this in Scripture.

1 Thessalonians 4:13–17 (KJV)

¹³ But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.

¹⁴ For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, *even* so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.

¹⁵ For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive *and* remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.

¹⁶ For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

¹⁷ then we which are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

We also read in Romans the following.

Romans 8:10–11 (KJV)

¹⁰ And if Christ *be* in you, the body *is* dead because of sin; but the Spirit *is* life because of righteousness.

¹¹ But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

And this.

1 Corinthians 15:53 (KJV)

⁵³ For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal *must* put on immortality.

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We see, therefore, that we who believe, who are in Christ, will live forever with God, even if we die in Christ first. While we were sinners, alienated from God, we have been reconciled by this same God in spite of ourselves. This gracious love is impossible to explain in human terms. We were all sinners, but now are saints in Christ! We have been redeemed from the curse of the Law by Christ. We are washed clean of sin by the blood of Christ! We have been adopted into the family of God and will live with him forever!

We in Christ are adopted members of the family of God. The adoption is made legal by Christ's death, burial, and resurrection! We are waiting for that time when He returns to bring us to our home with him! As children of God, adopted into the family, we now also receive the inheritance God has promised us. An estate whose value is far beyond the amount of what man considers wealth on this earth. If one could have all the resources on this planet as his own, he would appear as a pauper when compared with the riches of God. I tell people this and then remind them that God created not just the earth but the heavens, too! That means the universe and Heaven (capital H) are all his, also. There is no comparison between one earth and everything else God created!

We trusted in Christ, but it was God the Father who made it all possible and God the Son who made it all possible, and God the Holy Spirit that keeps us going until the fullness of time comes. We are saved by grace through faith and not of our works. We have nothing to brag about in ourselves but do glorify God for his work! All praise and honor go to Him! He alone is responsible for us being in Christ!