



The Epistle to the Ephesians

CHAPTER ONE

Salutation (1:1-2)

“Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, To the saints who are in Ephesus, and faithful in Christ Jesus:”

I. THIS IS NOT A STATEMENT OF PRIDE BUT ONE PRESENTING A SIMPLE FACT.

- Paul was Christ's apostle sent by Him (Acts 9:15-16) and belonging to Him (1 Cor. 3:1-11; 2 Cor. 10:7).
- Paul saw his apostleship as work, not a glorified position of personal elevation over other Christians (1 Cor. 9:26-27; 1 Tim. 1:12-16).

II. PAUL BEGAN MOST OF HIS LETTERS BY EMPHASIZING HIS APOSTLESHIP.

- Consider Rom. 1:1; 1 Cor. 1:1; 2 Cor. 1:1; Gal. 1:1; Col. 1:1; 1 Tim. 1:1; 2 Tim. 1:1; Tit. 1:1.
- Several chapters of 1 and 2 Corinthians show Paul defending his apostleship (1 Cor. 9; 2 Cor. 11-13).
 - When false teachers cannot refute the message, they often try to discredit the character or reputation of the messenger (2 Cor. 10:10, 13:3; Gal. 4:16).

Salutation (1:1-2)

“Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, To the saints who are in Ephesus, and faithful in Christ Jesus:”

III. PAUL’S APOSTLESHIP WAS BY THE WILL OF GOD.

- Everything – even the appointment of apostleship – happens by the will of God (**Matt. 6:10; James 4:15**).
- Nothing is of our own doing; we are completely and utterly dependent on God (**Acts 17:25, 28a**).

IV. SCRIPTURAL DEFINITION OF “SAINT.”

- “*Saint*” – Set apart by (or for) God, holy, sacred (Strong).
- Saints “*are*” (not *were*) faithful in Christ Jesus. Therefore, saints are living faithful Christians.
 - One cannot be faithful “*in*” Christ Jesus unless he is actually **IN** Christ Jesus (**Rom. 6:3; Gal. 3:27**).
- Given the contents of the epistle, one might think this letter would be addressed to new converts or spiritually weak Christians. Yet, the letter was especially intended for faithful saints.

Salutation (1:1-2)

“Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ”

V. “GRACE AND PEACE.”

- Paul used this expression in the opening addresses of all his letters (**Rom. 1:7; 1 Cor. 1:3; 2 Cor. 1:2; Phil. 1:2; Gal 1:3; Col. 1:2; 1 Thess. 1:1; 2 Thess. 1:2; 1 Tim. 1:2; 2 Tim. 1:2; Tit. 1:4; Phile. 1:4**).
 - This is intentional (**2 Thess. 3:16-18**).
- “*Grace*” is virtually the first and last words of the book of Ephesians (**Eph. 1:2, 6:24**).
- “*Peace*” is the tranquil state of a soul assured of its salvation through Christ, and so fearing nothing from God and content with its earthly lot, of whatsoever sort that is (Thayer).
- Spiritual contentment and rest in Christ can exist even in the midst of outer conflict (**Rom. 8:31-39**).
- John the Baptist said grace and peace came through Christ (**John 1:17**).
- Peace is conjoined with grace in this verse, meaning true peace comes from being in God’s grace (**John 14:27, 16:33; Phil. 4:4-7; James 1:17**).

Spiritual Blessings (1:3-14)

“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”

I. SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS FROM THE FATHER.

- The Author of our blessings – *“the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.”*
- The nature and sphere of our blessings – *“heavenly.”*
- The Medium through whom we have these blessings – *“Christ.”*
- *“Blessed”* – worthy of praise (Mounce).
 - God has blessed us in one sense. Therefore, we bless Him in another sense.
- Who is *“us?”*
 - Not the whole world because sinners are not in possession of *“every”* spiritual blessing.
 - Not Gentiles because *“us”* would include Paul, a Jew. Additionally, there were Jews in the church at Ephesus (**Acts 18:19-20, 24-28; Acts 19:1-8**).
 - *“Us”* refers back to v.1 – saints.

Spiritual Blessings (1:3-14)

“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”

I. SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS FROM THE FATHER (cont).

- Paul specifies several blessings/benefits granted to saints from God through Christ:
 - Capacity to be holy and blameless (v.4).
 - Adopted as sons (v.5).
 - Grace freely bestowed upon (v.6).
 - Redemption / forgiveness of sins (v.7).
 - Riches of His grace lavished on us (v.7-8).
 - Riches of His grace lavished on us (v.7-8).
 - Mystery of His will made known (v.9).
 - We have obtained an inheritance (v.11).
 - Sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit (v.13).
 - God’s own possession (v.14).

Spiritual Blessings (1:3-14)

“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”

II. THE ORIGIN AND REALM OF EVERY SPIRITUAL BLESSING.

- These blessings are *“in the heavenly places in Christ.”*
 - *“Heavenly places”* – pertains to, or is in, Heaven (Vine).
 - This expression is found only in the book of Ephesians (1:3, 20; 2:6; 3:10; 6:12).
 - This does not just define the origin of spiritual blessings; it shows that, to receive these gifts and blessings, we must go up to the heavenly places (Col. 3:1-2; Matt. 6:33; James 1:17; 1 John 2:15-16; John 18:36; Phil. 3:20).

Spiritual Blessings (1:3-14)

“just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him”

III. A DIVINE DECISION MADE “BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD.”

- “*Foundation*” means properly a laying down, a founding, a foundation – as where the foundation of a building is laid – and the phrase “before the foundation of the world” clearly means before the world was made, or before the work of creation (Barnes).
- This verse conveys how God formed the plan of saving man through His Son before the world existed.
 - **Matt. 13:35, 25:34; Luke 11:50; Heb. 9:26; and Rev. 13:8** all use the phrase “*the foundation of the world*” to mean the beginning of human affairs, the beginning of the world, the beginning of history, etc.
 - The death of Christ was in the predetermined mind of God as part of His eternal plan thought out before the foundation of the world (**Acts 2:22-23; 1 Pet. 1:20**).
 - A promise was made before there was even time and before anyone or anything was created (**Tit. 1:1**); that promise involved eternal life dependent upon obedience to Christ (**1 Pet. 1:1-2; Heb. 5:9**).

Spiritual Blessings (1:3-14)

“just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him”

III. A DIVINE DECISION MADE “BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD” (cont).

- The context emphasizes Christ as the object of God’s choice and not specific individuals (“us”).
 - God’s plan was not WHO would be saved but BY WHOM they would be saved (v.3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13; see also 1 Peter 1:20a).
 - God has not chosen certain individuals to be saved and certain individuals to be lost; He chose the plan of salvation whereby all men must decide for themselves either to accept or reject (Rev. 22:17, 3:20; Josh. 24:15).
 - God decided long ago that all who accepted His Son would be forgiven of their sins, yet God made man a free moral agent in His own image, thus forcing no one into obedience against their will. The choice of whom we will serve (God or Satan) is ours to make (Rom. 6:16).
- All spiritual blessings/benefits listed in v.4-14 are the consequence of God’s choice.
 - Whether we accept the terms for receiving these benefits is our choice, which is dependent on and indicative of our faith (Eph. 2:8; James 2:24).

Spiritual Blessings (1:3-14)

“just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him”

IV. AN UNCONDITIONAL ELECTION?

- Predestination/Unconditional Election is not taught by this verse. This doctrine contradicts the rest of the Scriptures resulting in God being a tyrant (exercising power or control in a cruel, unreasonable, or arbitrary way). Consider **John 3:16-17**; **Tit. 2:11**; **1 Tim. 2:3-4**; **2 Pet. 3:9**; **Eph. 6:9**.

V. AN INSEPARABLE CONNECTION OF HOLINESS WITH THE ELECTION.

- This verse highlights how sanctification has two aspects.
 - There is what God has done for us – He offers the plan of redemption through Christ (He offers to set us apart).
 - Then, there is what we must do – we must take advantage of the plan of redemption AND live faithfully (we must keep ourselves set apart).
- Our holiness is determined by our separateness from the world. It is possible to be in the world while also being completely different from the world (**John 17:14-17**).

Spiritual Blessings (1:3-14)

“just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him”

V. AN INSEPARABLE CONNECTION OF HOLINESS WITH THE ELECTION (cont).

- “*Holy*” – sacred, physically pure, morally blameless or religious, ceremonially consecrated (Strong).
 - We are expected to be holy, or “*set apart*” (Lev. 20:26). Holiness is a call (1 Thess. 4:7) to imitate God (1 Pet. 1:15-16; Lev. 19:2, 20:7, 21:8).
- “*Blameless*” (NASB) – without blemish (Thayer).
 - The word “*without blame*,” or “unblamable,” is properly without blemish; and the word “unreprovable” more nearly corresponds to our idea of one unblamable—i.e., one against whom no charge can be brought . . . It seems clear that the words refer not to justification in Christ, but to sanctification in Him (Ellicot).
 - Yes, we really can be blameless (i.e. sinless), and we must (Rev. 21:27)! But the only way we can be pure and without blemish before God is through Christ (1 John 2:1, 3:6, 9; Phil. 3:12).
 - This doesn’t mean we are going to be spotless from sin every second of every day (Rom. 3:23; 1 John 1:8), but we still can become blameless, i.e. completely without fault (Matt. 5:48; 2 Pet. 3:14; 1 Thess. 5:23; Psalm 119:1). Through Christ (1 Cor. 1:4-9; Phil. 1:9-10) and His blood (Acts 22:16; 1 John 1:5-9), we can have all blame (sin) removed.

Spiritual Blessings (1:3-14)

“in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself,”

VI. PREDESTINED FOR ADOPTION.

- What was predestined? = Those obedient in faith would be adopted as God’s children (**Gal. 3:26-29**).
- The salvation of specific chosen or predetermined individuals is not what was decided because that would:
 - ❑ Make God a respecter of persons (**Rom. 2:11; Col. 3:25; Eph. 6:9; Acts 10:34-35**).
 - ❑ Make God responsible for the damnation of the wicked (**Ezek. 33:11; 18:20, 32**).
 - ❑ Deny that God wants all men to be saved (**John 3:16; 2 Pet. 3:9; Tit. 2:11; 1 Tim. 2:4**).
 - ❑ Deny that Christ died for all (**Heb. 2:9; 1 Tim. 2:6; 1 John 2:2, 4:14**).
 - ❑ Reject the free will of man (**Rom. 6:16; 14:12, etc.**).
- The adoption here is not the final adoption (**Rom. 8:23**) but the present adoption into the Christian covenant to await final adoption (**John 1:12; Rom. 8:17**).
- The source of this adoption is God’s love, its cause is the mediation of Christ, and the result of the adoption is redemption from bondage to sonship (**Gal. 4:5**).

Spiritual Blessings (1:3-14)

“according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.”

VI. PREDESTINED FOR ADOPTION (cont).

- Because of God’s love, good will, and kindness, God chose to adopt us as His children.
 - God’s grace has been freely bestowed upon us (Rom. 3:24, 5:16-18, 6:23, 8:32).
 - By God’s grace, we are who we are (1 Cor. 15:10a).
- A God who desires all to be saved (1 Tim. 2:4) and gave His Son (John 3:16) for sinners and enemies (Rom. 5:8-10) is truly a God of grace deserving of all glory and praise!
 - If the doctrine of predestination is true, it is rather difficult to see love, good will, and kind intent from the Father, isn’t it?
- The “*Beloved*” refers to Christ (Matt. 3:17, 17:5; Luke 9:35).

Spiritual Blessings (1:3-14)

“In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace which He made to abound toward us”

VII. SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS FROM THE SON.

- Christ is our atonement for sin (Col. 1:14; Eph. 2:1; Matt. 20:28, 26:28); He paid the debt that man could not repay (Rom. 5:6-11; Matt. 18:22-27).
- “*Redemption*” – liberation procured by the payment of a ransom (Thayer).
 - Man separates himself from God by his own sins (Isa. 59:1-2).
 - God, through His mercy, prepared how man can be redeemed and returned to fellowship with Him by means of the blood of Christ (Isa. 53:1-7; 1 Pet. 1:18-19).
- “*Forgiveness*” – release from bondage or imprisonment (Strong).
 - The verse specifies what the redemption is that has been provided – forgiveness.
 - Christ has released us from the bondage of the Old Law (Gal. 5:1-6, 3:13-14), but this verse shows how He offers to release us from the bondage of sin (John 8:31-36).
 - Do we really view sin as bondage (Rom. 6:7, 20a, 22)?

Spiritual Blessings (1:3-14)

“in all wisdom and prudence, having made known to us the mystery of His will,”

VIII. THE MYSTERY MADE KNOWN.

- To execute God’s plan of redemption required both His “*wisdom and His insight*” (NASB).
 - “*Wisdom*” – supreme intelligence, such as belongs to God (Thayer).
 - God and Christ are the holders of all wisdom and knowledge (Col. 2:2-3), but their wisdom stands in contrast to the wisdom of man (1 Cor. 1:18-30; Jer. 10:23; Col. 1:9).
 - “*Insight*” – mental action or activity, that is, intellectual or moral insight (Strong).
 - The depth and richness of God’s wisdom is immense (Rom. 11:33).
- The wisdom and insight of God involved in the planning, execution, and revelation of His will to/for man is above human comprehension (Isa. 55:8-9).
- The mystery is the salvation of man through Christ (Eph. 1:3-8, 3:3-6; Col. 1:25-27, 2:2-3; Gal. 3:22-23).
 - This mystery is now known, or revealed, (Rom. 3:19-26; 2 Tim. 1:8-10).
 - The mystery was revealed through Christ and His word (Heb. 1:1-2; John 8:31-32; Rom. 16:25-26).

Spiritual Blessings (1:3-14)

*“in all wisdom and prudence, having made known to us the mystery of His will,
according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself,”*

VIII. THE MYSTERY MADE KNOWN (cont).

- The whole doctrine of the gospel is called “*the wisdom of God in a mystery*” (1 Cor. 2:7).
- God’s plan was to save man through Christ at an appointed, or established, time (2 Tim. 1:9).
 - This mystery was first revealed to the apostles (Matt. 13:11; Mark 4:11; Luke 8:10), then it was revealed to “us” (Jews first and then Gentiles [Rom. 1:16]).
- The mystery was executed “*according to His good pleasure.*”
 - It was by God’s “*kind intention*” (NASB) that He revealed and executed His plan of redemption for man (Eph. 1:5; John 3:16; Rom. 2:4; Psalm 103:1-4).

Spiritual Blessings (1:3-14)

“that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him.”

VIII. THE MYSTERY MADE KNOWN (cont).

- “*Dispensation*” / “*Administration*” (NASB) – primarily signifies the management of a household or of household affairs . . . Used of the arrangement or administration by God, by which in “the fullness of times” (or seasons) God will sum up all things in the heavens and on earth in Christ (Vine).
 - This administration is under the authority of Christ; it is His kingdom (**Acts 20:30-31; John 18:36; Col. 1:13-14**).
- “*Fullness*” – the end of an appointed period (Vine).
 - When the time was right, God chose to act upon His plan of redemption (**Mark 1:15**). Christ saves us by being full of grace and truth (**John 1:14-17**), but it was when the fullness of time came that God sent Him to earth to save man (**Gal. 4:4**).
- “*Gather Together*” / “*Summing*” (NASB) – bring together several things under one, reduce under one head (Mounce).
 - All things have been gathered together in Christ. Everything is united in and headed under Christ, both in Heaven and on earth (**Matt. 28:19; Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:20-23, 5:23; 1 Cor. 11:3**).

Spiritual Blessings (1:3-14)

“that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him.”

VIII. THE MYSTERY MADE KNOWN (cont).

- No one can possibly explain why God chose the first century as the period in history that encapsulated the fullness of time, but we can make some educated hypotheses.
 - The Old Law was complete and God went silent for 400 years after speaking through Malachi. People seeking God would have been anxiously waiting for Him to begin “speaking” to them once again (**Heb. 1:1-2; Matt. 13:10-17**).
 - The rule of Rome was prophesied in the Old Testament (**Dan. 7**).
 - Due to the Romans’ rule over the eastern hemisphere, the world had become more interconnected than ever before, allowing the gospel to be spread more easily.
- Ultimately, it is by God’s wisdom, insight, and kindness that He chose the first century to be a suitable time to execute His plan of redemption (**Rom. 5:6, NET**).

Spiritual Blessings (1:3-14)

“In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will,”

IX. A PURPOSED INHERITANCE.

- God’s will is not implemented arbitrarily but with intentionality and purpose, which extends to His offering of an inheritance to those who trust in Him.
 - This inheritance is through Christ and God makes this inheritance possible (Col. 1:12).
 - This inheritance is undefiled, imperishable, and reserved in Heaven (1 Pet. 1:3-4).
 - This inheritance is the result of God’s deliberate foreordination. “We” (saints, Eph. 1:1) are granted this inheritance.
 - God provides a divine guarantee of this inheritance by granting saints the Holy Spirit (Eph. 1:13-14).
- God predestined the inheritance; He did not predestine specific individuals to receive the inheritance.
 - God determined long ago that this inheritance would be available to all who obey His Son (Heb. 5:9).

Spiritual Blessings (1:3-14)

“In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will,”

IX. A PURPOSED INHERITANCE (cont).

- “*Counsel of His will*” expresses how God’s decisions are not informed by human counsel or advice.
 - There is no better source of counsel for God than Himself and His will (Job 12:13, 37:16; Psalm 33:11; Prov. 19:21; Isa. 46:9-10; 1 John 3:20); He has no need to seek the counsel of man.
- The affirmation here is not merely that God executed the salvation of man and the provision of inheritance according to the counsel of his own will but ALSO that He works “*all things*” according to the counsel of His will. Everything is a product of His work (1 Cor. 12:6).
 - There is comfort in knowing that God forms and governs things (even undesirable things) after the counsel of His will because this confirms that He does not act arbitrarily (Rom. 8:28).

Spiritual Blessings (1:3-14)

“that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory. In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation;”

X. CHRIST – THE SOURCE AND FULFILLMENT OF HOPE.

- “*We who were the first*” (NASB) likely refers to all Jewish Christians (Rom. 1:16; Luke 24:47; Acts 2; Acts 13:46), whereas “*you also*” (Eph. 1:13) likely refers to the Gentile Christians.
 - Preaching to the Jews fulfilled the hope of promise from God (Acts 26:6-7, 28:20) while the Gentiles were at one time without hope until they believed and obeyed the gospel (Eph. 2:11-13).
- Trust involves more than just mere belief (2 Tim. 1:2, GW; 1 Tim. 4:10; Heb. 11:6).
 - The Gentiles “*trusted*” Christ after hearing the gospel (Rom. 10:14, 17; John 6:44-45; Mark 16:15-16).
 - It is not enough to believe in Jesus; we must put all our trust in Him, which requires obedience (2 Thess. 1:8).
- Hope is a powerful tool (Rom. 5:2-5, 8:24-25, 12:12, 15:13; Heb. 10:23; 1 Cor. 15:19; Lam. 3:24; Psalm 33:22, 130:5), but hope is unnecessary if God arbitrarily chooses those who are saved and lost.

Spiritual Blessings (1:3-14)

“that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory. In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation;”

XI. REDEEMED FOR A PURPOSE.

- The redeemed are to bring praise and glory to God.
 - *“we . . . have been destined and appointed to live for the praise of his glory”* (RSV)
- Praise should be ascribed to God for our salvation (1 Pet. 1:8-9; 1 Cor. 6:20; Psalm 40:16).
 - We praise / glorify God by how we live (Matt. 5:14-16; 1 Cor. 10:31-33).
 - We live lives of praise to God because that is why we were created and redeemed (Eph. 2:10; Isa. 43:7).
- Salvation is not unconditional, further confirming God does not arbitrarily select people to be saved or lost.
 - Salvation is dependent on hearing the word of truth and then trusting in Christ (Heb. 11, 12:1-2).
 - *“the gospel of your salvation”* – salvation requires personal work (Phil. 2:12; Heb. 2:3).

Spiritual Blessings (1:3-14)

“in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.”

XII. SEALED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT.

- A seal indicates:
 - Authentication (**Esth. 8:8; Dan. 6:17**); Ownership (**Jer. 32:11-12**); Security (**2 Tim. 2:19**); Confirmation (**John 3:33**).
- The Holy Spirit is a first installment, deposit, down payment, or pledge from God until we receive heaven.
 - The seal occurs in the present to indicate what will happen in the future if we remain sealed (**Eph. 4:30**).
 - The Holy Spirit (the Spirit Himself) is given to all Christians upon obedience to the Gospel (**John 7:38-39; Acts 2:38, 5:32; Gal. 4:4-6; Tit. 3:4-7; Rom. 8:16, 26-27**).
 - The Holy Spirit serves as a seal and guarantee of salvation for the saints (**Eph. 4:30; 2 Cor. 1:21-22, 5:5**), but when a Christian sins, God's seal departs from us (**Psalms 51:11b; 1 John 3:24**).
 - **1 Cor. 6:19** states, “*the Holy Ghost ... is in you*” (KJV). It is rather sad, then, that so many Christians do not really believe the Holy Spirit is in them serving as their seal/guarantee of salvation.

Spiritual Blessings (1:3-14)

“in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.”

XIII. THE HOLY SPIRIT – THE SPIRIT “OF PROMISE.”

- The Holy Spirit is described in this passage as the *“Holy Spirit of promise.”*
 - The Spirit was announced by promise (Acts 2:16; Joel 2:28; Zech 12:10).
 - Although the promise of miraculous measures of the Holy Spirit was limited to the first century, all who submit to Christ will receive a non-miraculous measure of God’s Spirit when they obey the gospel (Acts 2:38-39).

XIV. SEALED BY THE SPIRIT TO LIVE BY THE SPIRIT.

- Being sealed with the Spirit should lead us to living by the Spirit rather than living by the flesh (Gal. 3:14; 5:16-17, 25; 6:8; Eph. 5:18; Rom. 8:1-16).
- We are a *“possession”* of God; we are not our own (1 Cor. 3:23). Specifically, our bodies are the *“purchased possession”* which will be redeemed on the day of judgment where we will receive a new body (1 Cor. 6:19-20; Rom. 8:11-23).
- Christ died to redeem us as His possession (Tit. 2:13-14; 2 Tim. 2:19; 1 Pet. 2:9).

Spiritual Blessings (1:3-14)

“in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.”

XV. REDEEMED TO THE PRAISE OF HIS GLORY.

- “*Glory*” – primarily signifies an opinion, estimate, and hence, the honor resulting from a good position (Vine).
- This is the now the third time that the phrase “*praise of His glory*” has appeared (v. 6, 12, 14).
- When saints are redeemed and eternally in the presence of the King, this will be the highest tribute to God's glory.

Paul's Prayer for Enlightenment (1:15-23)

"Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers:"

I. GRATITUDE FOR FELLOW LABORERS.

- Due to the Ephesians hearing the gospel, believing, and being sealed by the Holy Spirit, Paul prayed often for these Christians. Paul was grateful for these fellow saints, but his thanksgiving also prompted him to prayer on their behalf.
 - When we see brothers and sisters in Christ growing in faith and love, thanks is due to God (2 Thess. 1:3).
 - There is joy knowing the Lord's body is flourishing, growing, and abounding in faith and love (1 Thess. 3:6-10).
- Paul frequently gave thanks for fellow Christians (Col. 1:3, 9; Rom. 1:8; Phil. 1:3; 1 Thess. 1:2, 2:13; 1 Cor. 1:4; Phile. 1:4; 2 Tim. 1:3).
 - Therefore, Christians today certainly should imitate Paul's example by frequently giving thanks and praying for fellow Christians (2 Thess. 2:13).

Paul's Prayer for Enlightenment (1:15-23)

“Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers:”

II. WELL-KNOWN FAITH IN CHRIST AND LOVE FOR THE BROTHERHOOD.

- The Ephesians' faith was obviously publicly known; they did not have a “closeted” faith (**Matt. 5:14-16; Luke 11:33; Rom. 16:19**).
- There is a distinction made between faith “*in*” the Lord Jesus and love “*for*” (towards, KJV) all the saints.
 - Faith in Christ leads to a love for people (**1 John 4:7-16, 19-21; John 13:34, 15:12; Rom. 13:8; Matt. 5:43-48**).
 - Faith in Christ should lead to us living lives defined by love (**Gal. 5:6; 1 Thess. 1:3; 1 Cor. 13:1-7**).
- Love is one of defining characteristics in possessing the fruit of the Spirit (**Gal. 5:22**), and all are known by their fruits (**Matt. 7:16-20**).

Paul's Prayer for Enlightenment (1:15-23)

“Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers:”

III. PAUL “HEARD OF” THEIR FAITH AND LOVE – SOME QUESTIONS.

- Questions have been raised asking if Paul actually wrote this letter due to the statement that he “*heard of*” the Ephesians’ faith and love rather than “witnessed.” The argument is that Paul wrote to the Ephesians as if they were strangers because this language (“*heard of*”) would not be used by a man addressing people among whom he had spent three years of his life. However, there are some blatant flaws with this conclusion.
 - Paul likely heard nothing after bidding farewell to the elders in Acts 20. By saying he “*heard of*” their faith and love, Paul could simply be referring to information he had received since leaving Ephesus (like what happens in **1 Thess. 3:4-6**). Thus, Paul did not cease to give thanks for what he “*heard*” regarding their faith since his departure, NOT their first faith.
 - Are we to presume no new converts were made in the time since Paul’s departure? He would have only “*heard of*” their faith since he never met these people personally.
 - Paul uses the same expression “*heard of your faith*” in **Col. 1:4**, and it appears that Paul never actually set foot in Colossae (**Col. 2:1**). However, Paul uses the same expression “*heard of your faith*” in **Phile. 1:5** although it appears that Paul had a direct and personal impact on Philemon’s salvation (**Phile. 1:19**). Virtually no scholarly debate exists questioning if Paul wrote Philemon.

Paul's Prayer for Enlightenment (1:15-23)

"Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers:"

IV. LOVE FOR "ALL THE SAINTS."

- The phrase "*all the saints*" could just simply mean that the Ephesians were a very loving group of people. However, the phrase "*all the saints*" could also imply Ephesus was free from the spirit prevailing in some other churches, where differences in opinion about the necessity of circumcision had interrupted love.
- The church in Ephesus was made up of both Jews and Gentiles. Therefore, this phrase could be an allusion to the fact that the Ephesians were not falling into the trap that the Galatian Christians had succumbed to (Gal. 5:1-15).

Paul's Prayer for Enlightenment (1:15-23)

“that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened;”

V. THE GOD AND FATHER OF GLORY.

- God is not only our God and Father but also God and Father of Jesus Christ (Eph. 1:3; John 20:17; Matt. 27:46).
 - He is described as “*the Father of glory*,” or the God and Lord of glory (Acts 7:2; 1 Cor. 2:8; James 2:1).
 - God is described elsewhere as the Father of Mercies (2 Cor. 1:3) and Father of Lights (James 1:17).

VI. A PRAYER FOR WISDOM AND REVELATION IN KNOWLEDGE.

- “*Revelation*” – a disclosure of truth, instruction, concerning divine things before unknown, especially those relating to the Christian salvation; a spirit received from God disclosing what and how great are the benefits of salvation (Strong).
 - “*Revelation*” in this verse does not refer to miraculous knowledge or a miraculous method of imparting it. Instead, the word simply expresses the removal of ignorance (Psalm 119:18).

Paul's Prayer for Enlightenment (1:15-23)

“that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened;”

VI. A PRAYER FOR WISDOM AND REVELATION IN KNOWLEDGE (cont).

- Paul did not pray that God would grant the Ephesians wisdom and revelation; he prayed they would receive the “*spirit*” of wisdom and revelation.
 - The importance of having an earnest desire (“*spirit*”) for more knowledge about God and His word even after we have believed and been sealed by the Holy Spirit is apparent here (2 Pet. 3:18; 1 Pet. 2:2-3; 1 Tim. 4:11-16).
 - If we are not growing spiritually, then we are dying spiritually (Heb. 5:12-14, 6:1; Matt. 4:4; Col. 1:10).
- “*Knowledge*” – signifies “perfect and thorough knowledge” (Ellicott).
 - Consider Luke 1:4; 1 Cor. 13:12; Eph. 4:13.
- The condition Paul prayed for is not merely acknowledgment, but knowledge.
 - Paul frequently prayed for saints to grow in knowledge (Phil. 1:9; Col. 1:9-10).
 - We should regularly pray for knowledge (James 1:5).
 - Grace and peace come by growing in knowledge (2 Pet. 1:2).

Paul's Prayer for Enlightenment (1:15-23)

“that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened;”

VI. A PRAYER FOR WISDOM AND REVELATION IN KNOWLEDGE (cont).

- “*Enlighten*” – illuminate, make to see (Strong).
 - The metaphor of eyes being opened/closed to knowledge is prevalent throughout the Bible (Psalm 119:18; Matt. 13:15; John 12:40; Acts 26:18; Rev. 3:18; Eph. 5:14).
- Most scholars agree that “*eyes of your heart*” (NASB) is the more accurate translation rather than “eyes of your understanding.”
 - The heart is key to spiritual enlightenment (Rom. 1:21; 1 Cor. 2:9, 4:5).
- Although enlightenment is occasionally used to represent initial obedience to the gospel (Heb. 6:4, 10:32), this passage presents enlightenment as the product of possessing the spirit of wisdom and revelation.
- Man requires enlightenment for true and sound understanding (Prov. 3:5-6).

Paul's Prayer for Enlightenment (1:15-23)

“that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints”

VI. A PRAYER FOR WISDOM AND REVELATION IN KNOWLEDGE (cont).

- This enlightenment is specifically for helping Christians know *“what is the hope of His calling.”*
 - This phrase appears in **Eph. 4:4** and points toward the final reconciliation with God (**Gal. 5:5; Col. 1:5; Heb. 6:18; Tit. 2:13**).
 - Recognizing the object of our hope (Heaven) should motivate us everyday to serve God faithfully (**Heb. 6:19; Acts 24:15; Col. 1:5; 1 Pet. 1:3-5; 1 John 3:2-3**).
 - This call is offered to all (**1 Cor. 1:2, 24**), but very few ever answer the call (**Matt. 22:14, 7:13-14**).
- Paul reveals that the inheritance is revealed *“in”* (among) the saints, which further disproves the theory of predestination because *“all saints”* will share in this inheritance (**1 Thess. 3:13**).
 - The promise of this inheritance should drive all saints to persevere through any and all trials (**1 Pet 1:3-9; 2 Cor. 4:16-18, 5:1-4**).

Paul's Prayer for Enlightenment (1:15-23)

“and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places,”

VI. A PRAYER FOR WISDOM AND REVELATION IN KNOWLEDGE (cont).

- The greatness of God's power is “*exceeding*.”
 - This Greek word is found only in Paul's epistles, providing further evidence that Paul wrote this letter since it is characteristic of his speech/writing (Rom. 7:13; 1 Cor. 12:31; 2 Cor. 1:8, 3:10, 4:7, 4:17, 9:14, 11:23, 12:7; Gal. 1:13; Eph. 2:7, 3:19).
- “*Mighty*” – dominion, strength, power; a mighty deed (Strong).
 - The Greek word is never used in Scripture to refer to the actions of man (Eph. 1:19, 6:10; Col. 1:11; Acts 19:20; Luke 1:51; 1 Tim. 6:16; 1 Pet. 4:11, 5:11; Jude 1:25; Rev. 1:6, 5:13).
- “*Power*” – miraculous power, might, strength (Strong)
- “*Work*” – working, action, productive work, activity; confined to superhuman activity in the NT (Strong).

Paul's Prayer for Enlightenment (1:15-23)

“and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places,”

VI. A PRAYER FOR WISDOM AND REVELATION IN KNOWLEDGE (cont).

- We know God exerts His power over earthly matters, but, in this context, God's “*mighty power*” was on display when he miraculously resurrected Christ from the dead.
 - Just as God raised the Lord by His power, so too will He raise up saints by His power (1 Cor. 6:14; Phil. 3:20-21).
- Recognizing God's power displayed through the resurrection of Christ is so fundamental to our faith that without it we are pitiable (1 Cor. 15:12-19).
 - Christ is called the “*Son of God with power*” due to His resurrection from the dead (Rom. 1:4, KJV).
 - Death is the last enemy that will be conquered and destroyed when God's power brings about the resurrection of the dead (1 Cor. 15:23-27).
 - The powerful working of God through brings us from spiritual death to spiritual life (Col. 2:11-12, ESV).

Paul's Prayer for Enlightenment (1:15-23)

“He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come”

VI. A PRAYER FOR WISDOM AND REVELATION IN KNOWLEDGE (cont).

- Christ is in a position of authority over all things. He is currently seated at the right hand of God (**Mark. 16:19; Heb. 12:2, 10:12, 1:13; Acts 2:30-33**), reigning on His throne in Heaven (**1 Cor. 15:20-28**).
 - In everything, Christ has earned the preeminence (**Col. 1:18; Heb. 2:9**) because He is King of kings and Lord of Lords (**Rev. 19:16, 1:5**).
 - Christ is above all principality and power because He is the fullness of the Godhead (**Col. 2:8-9**) and has disarmed all enemies who can prevent man from serving God faithfully (**Col. 2:11-15; Rom. 8:31-39; Eph. 6:10-12**).
 - The Greek words translated as “*principality and power*” also appear in **Luke 12:11, 20:20**; and **Tit. 3:11** to identify earthly powers, whereas when the words appear in **1 Cor. 15:24** they seem to indicate more than just earthly powers (**1 Pet. 3:22**).
- His authority and dominion over all will be in effect “*not only in this age*” but also in the ages to come.
 - Jesus’s reign is eternal; He is king of all ages (**1 Tim. 1:17; Rev. 11:15**) and His name is above all names (**Phil. 2:5-11**) because there is salvation in no other name (**Acts 4:8-12**).

Paul's Prayer for Enlightenment (1:15-23)

“He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come”

VI. A PRAYER FOR WISDOM AND REVELATION IN KNOWLEDGE (cont).

- Jesus's kingdom is not to begin at some point in the future as premillennialists claim because His kingdom is already established (**Luke 17:20-21; Mark 9:1; Acts 2:30-33; Col. 1:13**).
 - To deny that Christ is now ruling his kingdom robs Him of His present glory (**Luke 24:26, ISV**).
- Living faithful saints sit together with Christ in the heavenly places (**Eph. 2:4-7**).
- Saints who die faithfully in the Lord will be able to “*sit with*” Christ on His throne eternally (**Rev. 3:21**).
 - Whereas **Eph. 1:3** uses the expression “*heavenly places*” to indicate the nature and source of our spiritual blessings, the expression in this verse obviously refers to Heaven as the location wherein Jesus's throne resides (**John 14:13**).

Paul's Prayer for Enlightenment (1:15-23)

“And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.”

VI. A PRAYER FOR WISDOM AND REVELATION IN KNOWLEDGE (cont).

- All things have been put (past tense – “*placed*,” ASV) under Christ’s feet.
 - The “*feet*” represent the lowest position of the human anatomy; to be “*under*” the feet is to be in total submission and subservience.
 - On occasion, in ancient times conquerors would literally put their feet on the necks of their enemies to display their power over those whom they conquered (**Josh. 10:23-24**). In stark contrast to this, Christ’s authority connotes not only power but also loving provision and selflessness (**Eph. 5:22-25**).
- The authority of Christ (having “*all things put under His feet*”) was spoken about prophetically in **Psalms 8:6** and **110:1**. Paul affirms what was spoken of by the Psalmist in this verse, as well as in **1 Cor. 15:27**.
 - The subjection of all things to Christ was accomplished in earnest when He was resurrected and ascended back to Heaven to be with the Father but will be fully accomplished when Christ conquers the final enemy on the last day.

Paul's Prayer for Enlightenment (1:15-23)

“And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.”

VI. A PRAYER FOR WISDOM AND REVELATION IN KNOWLEDGE (cont).

- Christ's authority exists not only over the church but over “*all things*” and all flesh (**John 17:1-2**).
- Christ is head of the church.
 - Headship is a common theme in Paul's writings (**1 Cor. 11:3**; **Eph. 5:23**).
- The church represents the body of Christ belonging to Him (**Matt. 16:18**).
 - There is only one church built by Christ (**Eph. 4:4**) with only one head over it.
- The notion of Christians as the “*body of Christ*” is also found in **Col. 1:24** and **Rom. 12:4-5**.
 - **1 Cor. 12:27-28** uses the terms “*body*” and “*church*” interchangeably.
- The “*church*,” as it is used in this passage, refers to the whole body of saved believers the world over, like in **1 Cor. 10:32** and **Acts 2:47**. All who are in Christ are known collectively as the church.
 - This body exists as a union of like-minded believers in Christ who fellowship with one another in a living spiritual body (**Acts 2:38-47**).

Paul's Prayer for Enlightenment (1:15-23)

“And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.”

VI. A PRAYER FOR WISDOM AND REVELATION IN KNOWLEDGE (cont).

- The body (church) is looked upon as a whole unit with Christ as its head (Eph. 4:15-16, 5:28; Col. 1:18, 2:19).
 - Of course, the church is not the literal physical body of Christ but the spiritual body attached to its spiritual head.
 - The church is built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, but Christ is its chief cornerstone and the one with whom all authority resides and originates (Eph. 2:20).
 - Perhaps the greatest compliment ever given to the church is conveyed by the idea that the church is Christ's body, that is, a necessary part of Him.
- But Christ is not just head of the church; He is head “to” the church.
 - Christ governs and rules it according to His will.
 - The church (and no member of it) is authorized to make laws for itself because the church obeys the laws of Christ.

Paul's Prayer for Enlightenment (1:15-23)

“And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.”

VI. A PRAYER FOR WISDOM AND REVELATION IN KNOWLEDGE (cont).

- The church represents the fullness of Christ.
 - Since Christ is necessary for salvation, then being in the church is necessary because the church is the “*fullness of Him*.” Just as a person cannot be in a saved relationship with the Father without being in Christ (John 8:24, 14:6), neither can a person be in a saved relationship with Christ without being in His church.
- All fullness dwelled in Christ by Him giving Himself on the cross (Col. 1:19-20), and Christ represents the fullness of God (Col. 2:9, 1:15; John 1:14-16).
- It is Christ who “*fills all in all*.”
 - Christ is all and is in all (Col. 3:11). He is the source of all that is good.
 - Christ fills us as we fill Him (1 Cor. 8:6; 1 John 3:24; Col. 1:24-25).
 - Members of the Lord's body must look to their Head as the source for all righteousness and guidance (John 14:6).

Paul's Prayer for Enlightenment (1:15-23)

“And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.”

VI. A PRAYER FOR WISDOM AND REVELATION IN KNOWLEDGE (cont).

- The Greek word translated as “*fullness*” is derived from a verb signifying, first, to fill; next to fulfill, or complete (Ellicott).
 - The phrase appears multiple times in Ephesians.
 - Christ fills the church with fullness of God (**Eph. 3:19**).
 - Individually, members of the church must work together to achieve the fullness of Christ (**Eph. 4:11-16**).