

Studies

In

Ephesians

Lesson 05

Chapter One

Notes On Chapter One.

II). Every spiritual blessing vss.3-14.

a). The work of the Father vss.3-6.

Verse 3. Beginning from this verse, the Trinitarian nature of salvation is unfolded to us. The various aspects of salvation which come to us from God in Jesus Christ are “blessings”. These “blessings” have been planned and prepared by God for His people from eternity.

“**Blessed**” – appears three times in this verse as :
 “Blessed” – *eulogetos*; “has blessed” – *eulogesas*;
 “blessing” – *eulogia*.

Eulogetos is a verbal adjective. It means “to speak well of”. (**Ferguson**). It appears 8 times in the N.T. and it is only used of God and never used of people.

Mk.14:61 – “Blessed” used as a name of God.

Lk.1:68 – Zacharias blessed God for the promised salvation from sin. (cf. Psa.72:18).

Rom.1:25; 9:5; 2Cor.11:31 – God is the One who is (to be) blessed “forever”. (cf. 1Chron.29:10; Psa.41:13; 106:48).

2Cor.1:3; Eph.1:3; 1Pet.1:3 – In all three verses the same expression is used, “Blessed the God”.

In Biblical usage the concept of “blessing” has two senses :

(a). One in regard to God : God blesses man when He

grants him the highest condition of well-being possible for him.

(b). The other in regard to man : man blesses God when he offers up praise of God's worthiness. (**Uprichard**).

"Blessed be the God" : there is no verb in Paul's statement. "Be" is inserted and in italics. Paul wrote "Blessed the God". The statement is not a wish but a declaration and is better : "Blessed is the God". Blessing (praising) God was a characteristic component of Jewish prayer which usually ended with the words, "Blessed are You, O Lord." God is to be blessed because He has blessed us.

The God who is blessed is clearly identified. He is **"the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."** (cf. Rom.15:6; 2Cor.1:3; 11:31; Col.1:3; 1Pet.1:3). Note the following :

1). "God and Father" are joined together. "Father" further describes God. This God is peculiarly the "Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." As we shall see very shortly, the Jews clearly understood the implications of the peculiarity of this relationship between God and Jesus.

2). In the gospels Jesus repeatedly called God "My Father". In two instances He referred to Him as "My heavenly Father." (Matt.15:13; 18:35).

3). In Jn.5:17 Jesus said to the Jews, "My Father is working until now, and I Myself am working." And vs.18 says, "For this reason therefore the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because He not only was breaking the Sabbath, but also was calling God His own Father, making Himself equal to God." The Jews clearly understood the implications when Jesus said, "My Father."

4). In Jn.20:17 the resurrected Jesus told Mary to tell His disciples, "I ascend to My Father and your Father, and My God and your God." Here, in a climactic way, Jesus has delineated the peculiarity of the relationship He has with God ("My Father") as opposed to the relationship His disciples have with God ("your Father"). The build up to this climactic declaration, is seen in the gospels. (see, for example, Matt.5:16, 45, 48; 6:1, 4, 6, 8, 9).

The phrase **"of our Lord Jesus Christ"** denotes four facts :

- i).** His personal relationship to the believer ("our Lord").
- ii).** His name "Jesus", the significance of which is seen in Matt.1:21.
- iii).** His Lordship. "Jesus is Lord" was a most important confession in the early church. (cf. Acts 2:36; 10:36; Rom.10:9; 2Cor.4:5; Phil.2:11).
- iv).** The title "Christ" is more than a name. He is the promised Messiah would bring salvation. In Acts 2:36 Peter emphasized to the Jews that the crucified Jesus is

both “Lord and Christ”, both Yahweh and Messiah. Under normal circumstances this would be blasphemy to the Jewish ears and would have resulted in a riot and even murder. But Pentecost was no ordinary day. In Jn.20:31 John said he wrote so that his readers would believe that the Christ (Messiah), the Son of God, is Jesus.

God is blessed because He is worthy of all praise. All human beings have the responsibility to come to know God and to worship Him. In the passage before us Paul is specific. He sets before us the reason why God must be praised. God must be praised because He **“has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.”** Note :

- a). God is the subject. He is blessing us. He is providing us with benefits. The focus is on God’s activity.
- b). This blessing God has blessed us with has its source in God.
- c). The recipients of God blessings are “us”. “Us” refers to the “saints” in vs.1. By extension, “us” will be all “saints”, all who are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ.

d). “Every spiritual blessing”. “Every” (all) speaks of every kind of blessing. The specifics of these blessings (benefits) are outlined from vs.4-14.

e). “Spiritual”. “The adjective *spiritual* means pertaining to or belonging to the Spirit, and thus *spiritual blessings* signify those which properly pertain to the life of the Spirit.” (O’Brien). “For a believer to live effectively in society, he or she needs benefits that have their source in God. So God has blessed the believer with every spiritual benefit necessary for his or her spiritual well-being.” (Heohner).

In our context, the specific nature of these gracious spiritual blessings is made plain in the verses that follow, “and include election to holiness, adoption as God’s sons and daughters, redemption and forgiveness, a knowledge of God’s gracious plan to sum up all things in Christ, the gift of the Spirit, and the hope of glory.... [E]ach gracious gift is mediated to *us* by the Spirit, and His activity is assumed throughout the paragraph....” (O’Brien).

f). “In the heavenly places” (realms). Literally : “in the heavenlies”. Eph.1:20 tells us “the heavenlies” is the sphere in which Christ reigns supreme and His people reign with Him. (cf. 2:6; Stott). “In the heavenly places” occurs five times in Ephesians (1:3, 20; 2:6; 3:10; 6:12).

Snodgrass wrote, “[In the heavenly places] is a way of saying that this world is not the only reality. A larger reality exists where Christ is already exalted as Lord, where believers participate in His victory, and where spiritual forces are opposed. [cf. 6:12]. Though believers live physically on this earth, they receive spiritual resources and their identity from a higher plane. The spiritual blessings given to Christians are enjoyed in the present life, for they derive from what God has done in Christ in the heavenlies.”

O’Brien wrote, “The blessings of salvation which believers have received from God link them with *the heavenly realms*. These gracious gifts are not simply future benefits but are a present reality for us, since they have already been won for us by God’s saving action in Christ. As the following verses make plain, these blessings are integrally related to the whole course of salvation history and have been applied to believers by the Spirit.”

g). “In Christ”. “It is *in Christ* that God blesses us, not apart from Him.” (**Ferguson**). **O’Brien** noted, “This third phrase (*in Christ*) which modifies the verb *blessed* signifies that God’s gracious gifts come not only through the agency of Christ but also because the recipients are incorporated in Him who is Himself in the heavenly realm.”

Hoehner wrote, “The believer who is united with Christ who is in heaven, partakes of the spiritual benefits from the

heavenlies. This was a new concept for the Ephesians for they had been worshipers of Artemis who was a local deity on earth.”

Points To Ponder.

I). “God is being praised, and the focus of that praise is what God has done in Christ and what is available in Christ.” (**K.S.**).

II). In Paul’s doxology God is the primary actor. The focus is on God and His plan. In our worship, we need Paul’s sense of God at work for us in Christ and through the Spirit.

III). God’s character is best described as “God for us”. (Rom.8:31). God has always been and always will be this kind of God. God is the God of the past, present, and future, and in all three He is at work for us. Our security rests on what He did before the foundation of the world, on what He did and continues to do in Christ and in the Spirit, and on what He has promised for the future. God has intentionally chosen and planned to go to great lengths to achieve salvation for His people. This is not an afterthought on His part, but the very essence of who He is.

Worship recounts the actions of God, and more specifically, God’s work in Christ. In other words, worship is theological. Theology must lead to doxology and doxology

must be theological. The doxological recounting of God's works (theology) is not cold because the reality of God's work for us in Christ creates deep emotion that energizes us.

IV). (*Ponder this 4th point very carefully*). The most important use of "in Christ" has a "local" sense and points to incorporation into Christ. That is, Christ is the "place" where believers reside, the source in which they find God's salvation and blessings, and the framework in which they live and work.

"Awareness of the presence of God and of living in Christ are the keys to all of life. People sin because they forget God. How strange that we forget the "place" we live. If we know that we live before God and in Christ, we know we live in a defining presence. Our lives become determined by the character of Christ and God. It becomes increasingly difficult to say, "I know I live in Christ, but I am going to do the opposite of what Christ expects." Christian ethics are grounded in our being in Christ.... If one lives in Christ ... Christ is that person's environment. Christians must live out their environment, out of an inner definition that comes from being in Christ, and empowered by His Spirit....

"Without ignoring the importance of Christ's being in us, the neglected idea of our being in Christ is much more significant. If we emphasize only that Christ is in us, we define reality, and Christ is about one inch tall. If we

realize we are in Christ, He determines reality and encompasses all we are.... Participation in Christ is destructive of wrong allegiances, tyrannies, and misdirection, and it is dynamic and creative so that one becomes a "Christ-bearer". Being in Christ is another way to talk about the fact that Jesus is Lord. He determines our being.

"Christians must live like people who know their "geography", who know they live in Christ and consequently are part of Him. As a result, Christians should never view themselves merely as individuals. Yes, they are still individual persons, but not *merely* individuals. They are part of Christ, and as will be developed in [this epistle], also part of other people in Christ. As such, they should always act in accord with who He is. Everything they do – whether good or bad – involves Christ. Knowing that we are part of Christ brings ethical transformation." (K.S.)

Homework.

Memorize Ephesians 1 : 1 – 10.

