

Seated In Heavenly Places

A study in the book of Ephesians

Lesson One

“Our Spiritual Possessions in Christ”

Paul opens his letter to the believers in Ephesus by pointing them to the blessings they possess in Christ. The phrase “in Christ” is used repeatedly throughout this letter, and over 8 times in this chapter alone.

F.B. Meyer states, “This has been called the ‘Epistle of *In-ness*,’ because it is so full of the preposition *in*..... We are **in Christ** and He is **in us**..... We are **in Him** so far as justification is concerned - that is our standing; and He is **in us** for sanctification - that is the source of a holy and useful life. The condition of a blessed life is the **conscious maintenance** of this oneness.”

Prayerfully read through chapter one of Ephesians. Circle or highlight in your Bible all of the occasions in this first chapter where you see the phrase “in” Christ, or “in” Him.

1. In verse 3, what does Paul say that our Father God has blessed us with?
 - a. **Who** does Paul indicate has been the **recipient** of these stated blessings?
 - b. For what **purpose?** Look at the **last part** of verse 4 and jot down the reasons Paul gives.
2. Go back to the beginning of verse 4 and read it over carefully. Paul says that God **chose us** in Him before the foundation of the world. What does verse 5 add to this statement? Write the verse out below.

3. This can be difficult for us to understand. The word “predestined” can also be translated as “pre-determined.” In other words, He decided, He made a choice to bring us into adoption as His sons and daughters. To get better clarity, look up Romans 8:29 and write out below what this verse says about how God “predestined” us to be adopted into His family. What does it say He based this predestination on?

We are limited by time and space. God lives outside of time, so for us to think we will ever be able to fully grasp this concept is foolishness on our part. We are finite, He is infinite. We may never be able to wrap our minds around the fact that God chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, or that He predetermined that we would be adopted into His family, but our limited understanding should never hinder our ability to rejoice that God had a plan for us to be His from the very beginning of time.

Concerning this verse, William Barclay states, “In Roman law, when the adoption was complete it was complete indeed. The person who had been adopted had all the rights of a legitimate son in his new family and completely lost all rights in his old family. In the eyes of the law, he was a new person. So new was he that even all debts and obligations connected with his previous family were abolished as if they had never existed.” (Barclay)

4. Take a few minutes to stop and ponder this statement. We have been given a new **identity**, a new **name**, and new **life**. We no longer need to carry around the debts and shame of the past. Those past regrets and failures have been forgiven. Those debt of passed sin has been abolished, as if it never was. Look up 2 Corinthians 5:17 and write the verse below.
 - a. Share your thoughts on what this means to you.

5. What does verse 6 tell us is **the subject** of praise and glory, by which He has made us accepted in the Beloved?

6. What else does verse 7 tell us we have received from the riches of His grace?

7. Verse 8 tells us that God made these riches of His grace abound towards us, in all wisdom and prudence. Look up the definition for the word “Abound” and record it below.

Abound –

8. You may feel completely **unworthy** of the riches of God’s grace. I’m sure we all do, because the truth is that we **ARE** unworthy. This truth will be emphasized to us in great detail when we get into our next chapter. But in spite of our unworthiness, verse 8 tells us that God chose us and predestined us to belong to Him ***in all wisdom and prudence***. Look up the words “Wisdom” and “Prudence” and write their definitions below.

Wisdom -

Prudence -

9. Does the fact that God used great **wisdom** and **prudence** in drawing you to become a recipient of His grace help you to trust in His **unfailing love** and His **good plans** and **purposes** for you? Take a moment to lift up a prayer of thanksgiving for the marvels of the riches of His grace towards you. Use a separate sheet of paper or write out your prayer in a journal. If you feel comfortable, share it with the group.

10. As we look at verse 9, we discover that part of what we have received from the riches of God’s grace is the knowledge of the **mystery of His will**. Verse 10 goes on to explain what that mystery is. What does it say?

11. There are many places throughout Paul's letters where he talked about God's "mystery" being revealed. Look up the following Scriptures and record below the "mystery" each one refers to.

Romans 11:25:

1 Corinthians 15:51:

Ephesians 3:3-6:

Ephesians 5:31-32:

Colossians 1:27:

1 Timothy 3:16:

All of the above are "mysteries" that were once hidden, but were revealed and made known to us by the Holy Spirit when we came to faith in Christ. Here, in verses 9 and 10 of Ephesians, chapter 1, Paul speaks of the mystery of God's plan, that in the fullness of times (or, when the time is ripe) He will gather together all things under the authority of Christ. This includes things in heaven and on earth.

Pastor David Guzik states, "God's ultimate plan is to bring together – to ultimately resolve – all things in Christ, either through Jesus as a **Savior** or Jesus as a **Judge**; this will happen in the **fullness of the times**..... When the time is ripe for the consummation of His purpose, in His providential overruling of the course of the world, that consummation will be realized."

12. Verse 11 speaks of another possession we have obtained through the riches of God's grace. What is it?

a. What other insights does 1 Peter 1:4 give to us regarding our inheritance?

b. To what purpose is this inheritance given to us? See verse 12.

13. God's ultimate plan for us is for our hearts to praise and worship Him and our lives to glorify and honor Him. Look up Revelation 4:11. Write down the reason given of why the Lord is so worthy of our praise.

14. What did God do for us, according to Ephesians 1:13, after we believed?

15. According to verse 14, what is the significance of this? What does Paul call this "seal?"

16. As we move into Paul's prayer in verses 15 through 23, we find a number of additional things Paul prays for us to receive in verses 17 through 19. Read over these verses carefully and record the things Paul asks the Lord to give to us.

Verse 17:

Verse 18:

Verse 19:

17. In verses 20 through 22, how does Paul describe God's "mighty power?" What has His mighty power accomplished?

18. Looking back at verses 18 and 19, have the eyes of your understanding been enlightened to what is "the **exceeding greatness** of His power toward us who believe?" Does meditating on His mighty, resurrection power toward us give you confidence that there is no mountain you face that His grace is not sufficient for? Share your thoughts.

19. In this last verse of chapter 1, what does Paul call the church? What does he say that we are?

20. We often hear the phrase that we are called to be “His hands and feet.” What does that mean to you? Describe that in your own words.

a. How does 1 John 4:17 add to this? What further insight does this verse give to us concerning our being “the body of Christ?”

21. What ministered most to your heart in this first lesson?

“Our thanks are due to God for all temporal blessings; they are more than we deserve. But our thanks ought to go to God in thunders of hallelujahs for spiritual blessings. A new heart is better than a new coat. To feed on Christ is better than to have the best earthly food. To be an heir of God is better than being the heir of the greatest nobleman. To have God for our portion is blessed, infinitely more blessed than to own broad acres of land. God hath blessed us with spiritual blessings. These are the rarest, the richest, the most enduring of all blessings; they are priceless in value.” (Charles Spurgeon)