

Ephesians 1:8-23

Eph. 1:3 **"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:"**

And with these words, Paul begins his synopsis of the spiritual blessings God has bestowed upon the Church of Jesus Christ.

All very different, but with this one common thread; they are all found in Christ.

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In our last lesson, we looked at three of these blessings, the first one being found in Eph 1:4 --- **"According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world --"**

Yes, the church of Jesus Christ was chosen
by God.

However, this initiative on His part did not
eliminate man's free choice.

And certainly it did not eliminate man's
ability to either accept or reject
God's salvation.

Like in any marriage, the mystical union
between Christ and His Church began
when the husband chose the bride, and
the bride said yes; a beautiful
example of the sovereignty of God and
the free will of man, intertwined.

And then in V5, which deals exclusively with
born again believers, God

**"predestinated us unto the adoption of
children (or sons) by Jesus Christ to
himself, ---"**

All of which was **"according to the good
pleasure of his will"**.

And then, in V7, we are made aware of the
tremendous cost involved.

Our redemption was purchased with the very
life blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

**"Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable
gift." 2 Cor. 9:15**

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So then, these are the first three spiritual
blessings bestowed upon the Church of
Jesus Christ, and yet there are three
more.

The fourth one is found in Eph. 1:8-9 ---

**"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 hath purposed
in himself:"**

Do you see it?

That's right.

The fourth spiritual blessing is revelation,
or in other words, **"the mystery of his
will"**.

Remember Jesus' words to His disciples?

They're found in John 15:15 --- **"Henceforth
I call you not servants; for the
servant knoweth not what his lord
doeth: but I have called you friends;
for all things that I have heard of my
Father I have made known unto you."**

And certainly, God has not left us in the
dark.

Through His prophets and apostles, He has
revealed Himself, His Son, and His
plan of salvation.

We are also told that He has set us aside
for a specific purpose.

Yes, He has **"made known unto us the mystery
of his will"**, and it is all contained

between the covers of that wonderful
treasure we hold in our hands.

God's Word was inspired by the Holy Spirit,
preserved by His Chosen People, and
placed in our possession.

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And not only that, but He has lived amongst
us for 33 years.

Yes, **"God, who at sundry times and in divers
manners spake in time past unto the
fathers by the prophets,
2: Hath in these last days spoken unto
us by his Son --"**

The same Son, by the way, who could say, **"he
that hath seen me hath seen the
Father."**

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So then, God hath revealed Himself in the
living Word, and in the written word.

He has given us an accurate account of the past, the real meaning of the present, and an insight into the future.

And speaking of the future, God gives us the bottom line right here in Eph. 1:10 --

"That in the dispensation of the fullness 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:"

Certainly, this doesn't describe our present situation.

One only has to listen to the evening news to be convinced that the wicked one is very dominant in the affairs of men.

No, Satan wasn't lying when he showed Jesus

"all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them" and said "All this power will I give thee, and the glory

of them: for that is delivered unto me".

And Eph. 2:2 calls him **"the prince of the power of the air"**.

Yes, from his vantage point above the earth, Satan and his demon host exercise their evil influence over the kingdoms of men.

However, this will not always be the case. The time is coming when that old serpent will be dethroned.

In fact, Isaiah 24:21 predicts the demise of his kingdom --- **"And it shall come to pass in that day, that the LORD shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth."**

No doubt **"the host of the high ones that are on high"** refer to the fallen angels that make up Satan's kingdom.

Yes, they are "**the rulers of the darkness of this world ---**", but not for ever.

In Rev. 2:7-9, we see the Archangel Michael in conflict with Satan's host --- "**And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, 8: And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. 9: And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.**"

And not only will that realm above the earth be cleansed, but the Lord Jesus Himself will destroy "**the kings of the earth**" at the Battle of Armageddon.

And then, the Lord Jesus will set up His
millennial kingdom --- **"the
dispensation of the fullness of times"**
will finally come to pass, and God
will gather **"together in one all
things in Christ, both which are in
heaven, and which are on earth; even
in him:"** Eph. 1:10

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And believers will play an important part in
that kingdom.

That's just one aspect of their inheritance,
spoken of in Eph. 1:11-12 --- **"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."**

Yes, like any earthly bride, the bride of Christ will share in her Bridegroom's limitless wealth and power, being the estate of One who is the **"heir of all things"**. Heb.1:2

And do you remember Paul's remark to the Christians in Corinth?

It's found in 1 Cor.6:2 **"Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?"**

Yes, we will.

Even though our heavenly home will be in the New Jerusalem, we will no doubt occupy that same realm above the earth that Satan has vacated.

And on Christ's behalf, we will exercise our influence for good rather than evil.

At the same time, the Gentile monarchs that have been destroyed in the Battle of Armageddon will be replaced by their Jewish counterparts.

And as Christ promised His twelve apostles,
they will **"sit upon twelve thrones,
judging the twelve tribes of Israel."**

Math 19:28

Yes, that's how it will be **"--- in the
dispensation of the fullness of times"**
when God gathers **"together in one all
things in Christ, both which are in
heaven, and which are on earth; even
in him:"**

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Eph. 1:13 **"In whom ye also trusted, after
that ye heard the word of truth, the
gospel of your salvation:"**

As you will remember, Paul had lived in
Ephesus for two or three years, and so
many of these individuals to whom he
was writing, would have been his
converts.

However, their salvation wasn't based on some clever theological arguments devised by Paul.

No, in spite of his education, Paul didn't use such methods.

As he told the Corinthian believers, I never resorted to "**--- excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God.**

2: For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified."

And so it had been in Ephesus.

Their new life was based upon "**the word of truth**", the gospel of their salvation.

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And now we come to God's sixth spiritual blessing.

Eph. 1:13 "--- in whom also after that ye
believed, ye were sealed with that
holy Spirit of promise, ---"

Paul didn't say they were sealed by the Holy
Spirit.

No, they were sealed **"with that holy Spirit
of promise"**.

The seal was the Holy Spirit Himself.

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Now, a seal is a mark of authority.

If a king affixes his seal to a document, it
becomes law.

And do you remember the Roman seal that was
placed on Jesus' tomb?

Woe betide anyone who would break such a
seal, for all the power of Rome was
behind it.

But, all the power of God was behind that
stone, and it was rolled away!

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Now, in a manner of speaking, our salvation is somewhat like a legal document.

For instance, John 5:24 says **"He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, (that's God's promise) and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life."**

Yes, we have God's word on it.

He sets the terms, and mankind is free to accept or reject them.

However, when both parties have signed that document, the seal of the Holy Spirit makes it official.

And not only that, but as Eph. 1:14 tells us, that wonderful seal becomes **"--- the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory."**

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I remember the first time my wife and I purchased a house.

It all began when we signed an Offer to Purchase, contingent upon being able to secure the full price.

To make the offer official, we had to leave an "**earnest**" with the realtor.

It really wasn't large enough to be properly called a down payment, but it was large enough to put quite a hole in our pocket if we defaulted on our offer.

In short, it proved we were earnest in our endeavour.

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Now, the Holy Spirit is the "**earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession**".

Jesus has purchased our salvation with His own precious blood, and someday He will return to receive that **"purchased possession"**.

In the meantime, the Holy Spirit is the **"earnest of our inheritance"**, a sort of foretaste of the glory ahead.

His illumination is a foretaste of everlasting light.

His sanctification is a foretaste of perfect holiness.

His comfort is a foretaste of everlasting joy.

He is the seal that makes the elect as secure as their inheritance, and the inheritance secure for the elect.

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So then, these are the 6 spiritual blessings bestowed upon the bride of Christ.

- Election

- Predestination
- Redemption
- Revelation
- A heavenly inheritance
- And the seal of the Holy Spirit

All are sure.

All originate with God.

All are in Christ.

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But I don't want to leave the impression
that there is nothing left for the
Christian to accomplish.

Certainly, that's true when it comes to our
salvation, but not when it comes to
our rewards.

In fact, in this very book, Paul tells
believers to **"Put on the whole armour
of God, that ye may be able to stand
against the wiles of the devil."**

Yes, we are in the midst of a conflict.

There is a victory to be won, and rewards to be gained or lost.

Just like the nation of Israel, the bride of Christ is here for a specific purpose.

And, concerning Israel, Paul tells us "---
**all these things happened unto them
for ensamples: and they are written
for our admonition ---**".

So, let's be admonished.

Let's learn from their example.

After all, it's a whole lot easier to learn from someone else's mistakes than our own.

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One of the reasons God brought Israel into existence was to be His instrument of judgment upon the wicked nations in the land of Canaan.

He had been long-suffering with them for hundreds of years, but now the time of judgment had come.

However, because of Israel's shortcomings, judgment was first of all delayed, and then incomplete.

Oh, they had enough faith to escape from the bondage of Egypt, but they didn't have enough faith to enter Canaan.

And, unfortunately, all of their blessings were in Canaan.

As a result, that first generation, which should have been eating milk and honey in the Promised Land, spent the rest of their lives eating dust in the wilderness.

And this was the most tragic part of this whole situation.

None of it was necessary.

Listen to the words of Rahab, one of the inhabitants of the land, and judge for yourself.

"--- I know that the LORD hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you.

10: For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt; (that happened 40 years ago) and what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites, that were on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed.

11: And as soon as we had heard these things, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you: for the LORD

**your God, he is God in heaven above,
and in earth beneath." Joshua 2:9-11**

But, as Heb. 3:19 tells us **"they could not
enter in because of unbelief."**

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And Christians can be stuck in the same
situation.

In spite of our heavenly Joshua, who has
guaranteed us the victory, it is
possible to fear the enemy more than
we trust the power of God.

Just like the priests, who finally carried
the ark into the land of Canaan, we
have to dip our feet in the raging
waters of Jordan before God will roll
them back. Joshua 3:13

Yes, we must get our feet wet, we must take
the first step of faith, and God will
do the rest.

Remember, the wilderness belongs to the
unbelieving believer.

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Well, we better get back to Ephesians
Chapter One.

V15-17 **"Wherefore I also, after I heard of
your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love
unto all the saints,
16: Cease not to give thanks for you,
making mention of you in my prayers;
17: That the God of our Lord Jesus
Christ, the Father of glory, may give
unto you the spirit of wisdom and
revelation in the knowledge of him:"**

At first, the content of Paul's prayer might
surprise us.

Usually we pray for the physical needs of
the brethren, and there's nothing
wrong and that.

And I'm sure these brethren, in and around
Ephesus, would have the same needs we
do.

Health might be a problem, no doubt there
would be financial needs, and of
course persecution.

And I'm sure Paul would be aware of all
this, but his only request seems to be
**"the spirit of wisdom and revelation
in the knowledge of him"**.

So, what does the **"knowledge of him"**,
involve?

Well, let's read on --- V18-19 **"The eyes of
your understanding being enlightened;
that ye may know what is the hope of
his calling, and what the riches of
the glory of his inheritance in the
saints,
19: And what is the exceeding
greatness of his power to usward who**

**believe, according to the working of
his mighty power ---".**

It's all about Him, isn't it?

- His calling
- His inheritance
- And His power

Now, **"the hope of his calling"** began when
God chose **"us in him before the
foundation of the world"**. Eph. 1:4

And as Eph. 1:13 tells us, the next step was
taken when we **"heard the word of
truth,"** the gospel of our salvation,
and believed.

But it didn't end there.

Not only has Jesus prepared a place for us
in heaven, but our Heavenly Father has
prepared a place for us on earth.

Yes, He has a definite purpose in mind for
our redeemed lives.

It's all a part of the "**hope of his calling**", and Paul wanted them to be aware of it.

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Back in V11, we heard about our "**inheritance**", and what a wonderful inheritance it is.

Now, in V18, Paul talks about God's "**inheritance**".

That's right, God's "**inheritance in the saints**".

It's a staggering thought, isn't it? Almighty God actually considers the saints to be His inheritance.

Certainly, ruined sinners would be no inheritance at all.

They're the enemies of God.

But "**the saints**" are quite a different matter.

The saints are a people set apart.

Actually, that's what the word "**saints**"
means.

And as such, they're His inheritance.

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My wife has a set of good dishes which she
purchased before we were married.

She was making good money as a court
stenographer, and this was a very
special acquisition.

In a word, they're English bone china, and
they're very beautiful.

We only use them when we're having company.

We also have a quantity of paper plates to
be used for picnics, etc.

Which set of dishes do you think Eleanor
prizes the most?

Obviously, it's the English bone china, and
not just because they're beautiful.

They cost her a great deal, and she
treasures them.

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As we learned in the book of Genesis, God simply spoke creation into existence. Now, I don't want to minimize God's creation in any way, but His inheritance in the saints was obtained at infinite cost. Certainly, He can point to a galaxy, with its myriad stars and planets, and say, *This demonstrates my glory.* He can display the sky, with its wind patterns, clouds, lightning and thunder, and say; *This is a little something I made.* He can point to His angelic host to illustrate His dominion and power. But when asked about His love, He will point to a band of human beings standing before His throne and say --- *They're here because I loved them.*

*I chose them before the foundation of the
world.*

*They cost me the precious blood of my own
dear Son.*

*I brought them to glory, and I moulded them
into the likeness of the only One who
pleases Me.*

*They're my **"inheritance in the saints"**.*

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So then, with genuine love in his heart,
Paul petitions **"the God of our Lord
Jesus Christ, the Father of glory"** to
grant these believers **"the spirit of
wisdom and revelation in the knowledge
of him"**.

As far as he is concerned, an appreciation
of God's love, an understanding of
God's purpose in setting them aside,
an awareness of the unique blessings

He has bestowed upon them, is all important.

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And then we come to "**his power**", a very unique ingredient, **in the knowledge of him**".

V19 "**And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power,**
20: Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, ---" and I'm going to stop right there.

Sometimes we fail to realize that apart from the complete absence of sin, Jesus possessed a human body just like ours. Certainly, Satan was quite aware of that. Right from the beginning of Jesus' public ministry, Satan built his strategy

around the fact that he was dealing with a human being.

Remember his first words, during Jesus' temptation in the wilderness?

"If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread."

What a clever suggestion, considering the fact that Jesus had been fasting for 40 days and 40 nights.

And at the end of Jesus' public ministry, Satan was still at it.

He energized evil men to beat Him beyond recognition.

Jesus was scourged to a point that would be fatal for many a man.

And finally, He was crucified and left for dead.

And just to make sure that would be the last they ever heard of Him, Rome affixed its official seal on His tomb.

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Yes, the long struggle had come to an end.
Satan had destroyed all the young children
in Bethlehem to bring about this one
end, and had failed.

But now he had won.

Or had he?

Absolutely not!

God would not suffer His **"Holy One to see
corruption"**.

By His mighty power, He **"raised him from the
dead"**.

And not only did He raise Him from the dead,
but He **"set him at his own right hand
in the heavenly places,**

**21: Far above all principality, and
power, and might, and dominion, and
every name that is named, not only in
this world, but also in that which is
to come:" Eph. 1:20-21**

Yes, while His astonished disciples looked on, Jesus **"was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight"**.

In fact, God's power lifted Him up, right past the realm of **"the prince of the power of the air"**; right past the stars and planets He had created, to a place that Solomon once called the **"heaven of heavens"**, and Jesus calls His **"Father's house"**.

That's the measure of power that **"he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead,"** and that's **"the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe"**.

No, we really don't belong in the wilderness.

V22-23 **"And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church,**

23: Which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all."

If the Holy Spirit hadn't personally written V23, it would seem blasphemous to even think such a thought.

Here we see the Lord Jesus Christ, seated at the right hand of God with all His enemies under His feet.

He is Lord of all He surveys.

And yet, in some mysterious way, just as Adam was incomplete without Eve, so Jesus finds His fullness in us ---

"the fullness of him that filleth all in all."