

Spiritual Blessings in Christ, Continued

Ephesians 1:7-14

Ephesians 1:7-14 - *"In Him" [Jesus Christ] "we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace⁸ which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence,⁹ having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself,¹⁰ 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.¹¹ 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,¹² that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory.¹³ In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, 14 who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory."*

Background Notes

The subject of Ephesians 1:3-14 is the believer's spiritual blessings in Christ. Notice that these blessings are not physical blessings, but spiritual blessings. God does not guarantee physical blessings such as perfect health and financial wealth for us as Christians. No! The so-called "prosperity gospel" is not taught in the New Testament. And don't think that if you don't have good health, or if your business venture isn't doing well, that you don't have enough faith! God does not guarantee these kinds of physical and material benefits to all faithful Christians, and there may be many reasons why He has not granted them to you.

But spiritual blessings -- that's another story! If you're a Christian, every single spiritual blessing that God has to offer is yours right now! That's what verse 3 says: *"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."*

Now we may not be enjoying our spiritual blessings in Christ, but that's not because He hasn't given them to us. Every single spiritual blessing is ours by divine right, but we need to appropriate these blessings. We need to appreciate them and live in the good of them. In the book of Joshua, we read that the Promised Land was given to the Jewish people -- but they had to go into the Land and possess it. In the same way, God has given a "Land of spiritual blessing" to those who have believed and trusted in Christ. These blessings are all ours, but we must go in and "possess the Land." We must appropriate these spiritual blessings, and live in the good of them.

Doctrinal Point

Believers are blessed with all spiritual blessings.

“Believers are blessed with all spiritual blessings” was also our doctrinal point for verses 3-6. There we saw two of our spiritual blessings, our election and our “son-ship.” The list continues in verses 7-14, where we find five more spiritual blessings that are given to us in Christ. These five spiritual blessings are the five sub-points under our doctrinal point.

a. Our spiritual blessing of redemption (v7).

Verse 7: In Christ, *“we have redemption through His blood.”* The word *redemption* implies that we were formerly in bondage – and we were! We were slaves to sin, and slaves to Satan -- whether we realized it or not. You don’t have to be addicted to gambling or drugs, and you don’t have to be hung up on pornography or illicit sex to be a slave of sin and a slave of Satan. There are many kinds of sin. Praise the Lord, we’ve been released and redeemed from this bondage. What a spiritual blessing!

What was the ransom price of our redemption? The blood of Christ! His **life** was given up in sacrifice as the price of our redemption. Mark 10:45 says that He *“gave His life as a ransom for many.”* 1 Peter 1:18-19 says that we were not *“redeemed with corruptible things like silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ.”* What an amazing spiritual blessing -- the spiritual blessing of our redemption.

b. Our spiritual blessing of forgiveness of sins (v7-8).

Verse 7-8: in Christ *“we have.... the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace which He made to abound toward us.”* What a spiritual blessing, to know that our sins are forgiven forever! Isn’t that much better than good health or being a billionaire?

Notice that our forgiveness of our sins is according to the riches of God’s grace, which He lavished upon us or made to abound toward us. Our forgiveness of sins is not according to our works, or on anything that we could do to earn God’s approval, but according to the riches of God’s grace.

c. Our spiritual blessing of wisdom and insight (v8-10).

As believers, we have the capacity to understand God’s plans and purposes for the universe that He has created. Unbelievers don’t have this capacity. You can’t get it out of the newspaper! Although we still have to study the Bible to

gain this insight, we have been given the spiritual capacity, the spiritual enlightenment, and the insight to comprehend God's revelation. It's not a matter of IQ!

What are God's plans and purposes for this universe? Verse 10: *"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."* The Bible teaches that a time is coming (and it may not be too far in the future) when Jesus Christ will return and set up His kingdom here on this earth, and all things in heaven and on earth will be subject to Him. Does this mean then that everyone eventually will be saved? No. Verse 10 is not teaching universal salvation – it is teaching the universal dominion of Jesus Christ – His dominion over all things! What a spiritual blessing it is, to be taken into God's confidence, to comprehend God's divine purposes for the ages, and to be enabled to grasp the mystery of God's will which is now revealed.

d. Our spiritual blessing of an inheritance (v11-12).

It's great to have an earthly inheritance left to you -- but I'm sure you'll agree that there are some built-in problems with an earthly inheritance, right? Think of all kinds of stories that you've heard about earthly inheritances: jealousy and greed and family fights -- and, of course, the inheritance is only earthly! It's only temporary! You can't take it with you!

Now listen to the description of our heavenly inheritance in 1 Peter 1:4: it is *"an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and [it] does not fade away, [and it's] reserved in heaven for you."* I'll take that spiritual blessing over any earthly inheritance!

The particular aspect of our heavenly inheritance that's in view in verses 11-12 is that we will share in Christ's glory forever. We've been predestined for that wonderful blessing of a heavenly inheritance!

e. Our spiritual blessing of the Holy Spirit (v13-14).

The Holy Spirit is our seal (v13), and the Holy Spirit is our pledge (v14). As our seal, the Holy Spirit guarantees our salvation. As our pledge, the Holy Spirit guarantees our inheritance.

Have you ever doubted your salvation? In Bible days, when a seal was applied to a document it signified ownership and security. That's the point that's being made here. If you've trusted in Jesus Christ as your Savior, you are sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise. How much more security do you want? You are as safe as God's seal upon you! How could the Bible tell you any more emphatically that you have eternal security?

The phrase *"after you believed"* (in verse 13, in some translations), is better translated, "when you believe" or "having believed." The sealing of the Holy Spirit is not a step that is subsequent to salvation. It's "part of the package" of our salvation.

In verse 14 we read that the Holy Spirit is our **pledge** – He’s the guarantee of our inheritance. In this sense, the Holy Spirit is like an engagement ring, or a “down payment.” An engagement ring is a promise of the marriage that’s to come in the future. A “down payment” is a pledge that a purchase will be completed in the future. 2 Corinthians 1:22 says that God has *“has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.”* The seal and pledge of the Holy Spirit guarantee our inheritance.

Our inheritance awaits us, and it includes the redemption of our bodies. Look at verse 14 again. The Holy Spirit is the *“guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.”* The phrase “the redemption of the purchased possession” could refer to our inheritance in general, but I believe, because of the context, that it refers to the redemption of our bodies. Even now our present sinful bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit. We are indwelt and sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, and the Holy Spirit is a pledge of what’s to come. Our full salvation is guaranteed -- even to the redemption of our sinful bodies.

That completes the list of spiritual blessings that are listed in Ephesians 1:3-14. Believers are blessed with all spiritual blessings!

Practical Application

You can be sure that there are no “maverick molecules” in this universe!

Look verse 11: *“God works all things according to the counsel of His will” (emphasis added).* What’s included in “all things”? Just the big plans of God? No, the small plans too! “All things” means all things!

The Lord Jesus said that not even one tiny sparrow is forgotten by God -- and the very hairs of your head are all numbered (Luke 12:6-7)! Does God’s sovereign control over everything include the atoms and molecules? Of course it does! Sparrows and hairs are made up of molecules. And there are no maverick molecules in the universe! The big plans of God and the small plans of God involve the movement of molecules – and God is in complete control, so there are no maverick molecules in this universe!

Now if that’s true, what does this say about God’s care and concern for you, His child? I love this truth! We can be sure that there are no maverick molecules in this universe!