

Text: Eph 1.3

For our study tonight I want to focus on one verse, but we will take a “big picture” look at our chapter to get there.

Ephesians 1

Key features of this chapter:

Three sentences in Greek

1-2: **Greeting**

3-14: **Theme (Expanded)**

15-23: **Prayer**

Read Eph 1.1-23

In the second sentence (3-14), look for a repeated phrase, the next point in our analysis of the chapter.

What is the phrase?

“to the praise of his glory,” v. 6, 12, 14

What does the phrase tell us?

There are three divisions in the sentence

Who is each division focused on?

1. **(3-6) God the Father**
2. **(7-12) Jesus Christ**
3. **(13-14) The Spirit**

Before we come back to this, let’s look back to the greeting

I. The Greeting (1-2)

Author: **Paul**

Office: **apostle by the will of God**

Recipients: **the saints who are at Ephesus**

What does the phrase, “who are faithful in Christ Jesus” communicate?

The recipients are saints by faith (lit. “to believers in Christ Jesus”)

What does Paul mean to say about God by offering grace and peace from “God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ”?

The Father and Jesus are equal

A few observations from the commentaries:

apostle ... by the will of God: “The strong term for will employed is of rare occurrence outside the LXX and N.T. His divine commission was never long absent from the apostle’s thoughts. He has not run without being specifically sent.”¹

“It is worth noticing that **grace** comes first, then **peace**. This is always the order. Only after **grace** has dealt with the sin question can **peace** be known.”²

II. The Blessing (theme) (3)

What word root is repeated three times in this verse? **blessed, blessing**

Can you tell from the English which part of speech we have with each occurrence? (Greek gives us word endings which make it a little easier.)

1. **Adjective “blessed be”**
2. **Verb “has blessed”**
3. **Noun “blessing”**

The basic idea in this word root is “speaking well of” or “saying a good word.” Which direction is the “good word” pointed in the first two instances?

1. **towards God**
2. **towards us/saints**

The last instance refers to the blessing from God to saints. Here it is modified by the word “spiritual.” What is a spiritual blessing? (Hint: you can

¹ “Ephesians,” in *Commentary on the Epistles to the Ephesians and the Colossians*, by Edmund K. Simpson, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, Mich: Eerdmans, 1957), 23.

² William MacDonald, *Believer’s Bible Commentary: Old and New Testaments*, ed. Arthur Farstad (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1995), 1905.

read ahead in the rest of this long sentence to see several spiritual blessings mentioned.)

Spiritual blessings are things that have to do with the spiritual life

Where are the spiritual blessings “located”?

“in the heavenly places in Christ”

What would the opposite of spiritual blessings be?

Earthly blessings

Does God give us the “opposite” blessings as well? **Yes**

Does God give us “every” earthly blessing? **No**

But, God does give us “every” spiritual blessing. Why do you think that is?

Various answers, but the spiritual blessings focused on here are universal blessings for every Christian

A few observations from the commentaries:

“Ephesians 1:3 states [the epistle’s] theme: *the Christian’s riches in Christ.*”³

On blessing: “This is a verbal form (*ho eulogēsas*) of the adjective ‘praise’ (*eulogētos*), at the beginning of the verse. The verb means ‘to speak well of, eulogize, extol’; here it means ‘to benefit, prosper.’ This word is not used in classical Greek literature. For example, Zeus is not said to have bestowed any specific act of blessing on anyone. Rather he is said to have caused good luck or good fortune. However, the verb *eulogeō* is used over 400 times in the Old Testament, indicating that God bestows benefits to His children in every Age. Mary was said to be ‘blessed’ among women and to be bearing the ‘blessed’ Child (Luke 1:42).”⁴

³ Warren W Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, vol. 2 (Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books, 1996), 9.

⁴ Harold W. Hoehner, “Ephesians,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1983), 616.

“‘Spiritual’ blessings are benefits that relate to our spiritual life in contrast to our physical life. In Israel God’s promised blessings were mainly physical, but in the church they are mainly spiritual.”⁵

“All **spiritual** blessings are *in Christ*. It was He who procured them for us through His finished work at Calvary. Now they are available through Him. Everything that God has for the believer is in the Lord Jesus. In order to receive the blessings, we must be united to Christ by faith. The moment a man is *in Christ*, he becomes the possessor of them all.”⁶

⁵ Tom Constable, *Tom Constable’s Expository Notes on the Bible* (Galaxie Software, 2003), Eph 1.3.

⁶ MacDonald, *Believer’s Bible Commentary*, 1907.