

# WHY PRAISE GOD?

Ephesians 1:3-14

Sometimes, as Christians we can narrow down the gospel to just one or two things that happen to us the moment we put our faith in Him. Usually, we tell others, "Jesus died on the cross for my sins so I can go to heaven when I die." While that is a part of the gospel, it is only two of the many blessings that God has given us in Christ. Paul, the author of the Ephesians understood that there are so many blessings that we have in Christ and made sure his readers know what those blessings are

## We Praise God because He blessed us in Christ

Ephesians 1:3

Paul begins his letter by praising God for all of the spiritual blessings that God has given us in Jesus Christ! Praise and thankfulness is a natural response when we have received a blessing from someone. Though God has blessed us in many ways, today we will focus on five blessings that God has given us in Christ.

## In Christ I will be made holy and blameless

Ephesians 1:4

While this verse has been interpreted in different ways, the context makes it clear that God chose beforehand that saints (believers) would be holy and blameless. In other words, before the 6 days of creation, God decided that those who are to believe in Jesus would be holy and blameless in his eyes. The church is the bride of Christ and as the bride prepares for her wedding day, she is clothed in white, washes and cleans herself of all blemishes and does her best to radiate in all her beauty before her husband. Likewise, the church is to clothe herself in white and wash herself clean and present herself without blemish. (Eph. 5:25-27) This happens through the process of sanctification as we read God's word and live it out. One day we will be completely purified of all lesser things and will be at that time holy and blameless. (Rev. 19) Praise God!

## In Christ I am a child of God

Ephesians 1:5-6

The word predestined is one of those words that we tend to load with meaning that is not there. When defined correctly and read in context we will see that the word predestined in the greek simply means: To determine beforehand<sup>1</sup>. Paul is saying that God determined beforehand that those who believe in Jesus will be adopted into the family of God as sons and daughters! And as sons and daughters we become heirs with Christ. (Rom 8:16-17). We are his children and receive all of the blessings of a son or daughter. Praise God!

## In Christ I am forgiven: past, present and future

Ephesians 1:7-10

Another blessing that we receive from Christ is that we have been redeemed! Redemption means to let go free for a ransom.<sup>2</sup> The ransom to free us was the blood of Jesus. Similar to that of a slave being set free from his master, we have been set free. What have believers been set free from? Our Sin! We have been set free not only from the punishment of our sins (transgressions), but the power of sin over our lives, past present and future, Col. 2:13-14. This includes murder, adultery, and others like it. EVERY sin has been forgiven in Christ. Praise God!

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<sup>1</sup> Zodhiates, S. (2000). *The complete word study dictionary: New Testament* (electronic ed.). Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.

<sup>2</sup> Zodhiates, S. (2000). *The complete word study dictionary: New Testament* (electronic ed.). Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.

In Christ I have received an inheritance  
Ephesians 1:11-12

As a son of God and heir, God will grant us an inheritance. This inheritance is not salvation or eternal life. But it is given to us the moment we accept Christ. This is different from the inheritance of rewards and authority in the millennial kingdom. Romans 8:17 would indicate that this inheritance is God himself. We don't possess God, but rather experience Him, a relationship with him. An adopted child will inherit the blessings of a child to parent relationship with their father and mother the moment they are adopted, but not before then. Similarly, when we are in Christ we receive the blessing of knowing or inheriting God as our father. Praise God!

In Christ the Holy Spirit lives in me  
Ephesians 1:13-14

Those who believe in Jesus as their Lord and Savior are sealed with the Holy Spirit in their lives. This was the promise given in John 14:25-26. It is the Spirit who helps us understand the scriptures and reminds us of God's word among other things. And this happens the moment when we put our faith in Christ. Another ministry of the Holy Spirit is His sealing. Like that of a legal document that is closed up with a wax seal, The Holy Spirit is the wax seal that God has placed on us saying we are His and that we will receive all that He has promised. Praise God that He has sealed us with the Holy Spirit.

## Conclusion

As we look at all that God has blessed us with in Jesus, we should first stop and thank Him for all that He has done for us. Then we recognize just how much He loves us and is for us and that should motivate us to live for Him!

Praise God!

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## **GRACE NEWS AND NEEDS**

- **Missions Meeting, TODAY , 11:30-1:00 in Modular Classroom.**
- **Women's Tea & Luncheon, Saturday, May 6<sup>th</sup>, 1-3PM, Sign-Up on Patio!**
- **Mexico Missions car wash fundraiser, May 13, Sign-Up on Patio!**
- **Have a desire to serve the body? Grab a "Helping Hands Ministry form" in the foyer and turn it into Cathy .**
- **VOM Needs for April: financial donations to purchase needed items.**
- **GCC Financial update: 2023 Budget Goal To Date: \$233,755 2023 Giving To Date: \$232,990**