

An illustration of an open book with stylized hills in the background. The book is open, showing two pages with horizontal lines representing text. The hills are in shades of brown and tan, with a central peak and two side peaks. The background is a dark gray with some small white dots.

Blessed With Every Spiritual Blessing

The Verse Behind Ephesians 1:3

Main Verse

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

That's one of those verses we can read quickly, agree with, and then move straight on to verse 4.

Yes, God has blessed us. That sounds nice. We might even underline it.

But what does Paul mean by "**all spiritual blessings**"?

What are "**heavenly places**"?

Are these blessings waiting for us in heaven, or do they belong to us **now**?

And why does Paul finish the verse with the words "**in Christ**"?

When we trace these words through Scripture, we discover that Paul isn't giving us a pleasant religious greeting. He's announcing that everything God promised, pictured, and prepared throughout the Old Testament has now been made available through Jesus Christ.

So let's look at the verse behind Ephesians 1:3.

What Ephesians 1:3 Is Saying

Let's read it again:

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

The first thing we should notice is that the word "**blessed**" appears twice.

God is blessed, and we have been blessed.

But the words don't mean precisely the same thing in each part of the sentence.

When Paul says, "**Blessed be God**," he's praising God. He's declaring that God is worthy of honour, thanksgiving, worship, and praise.

But when Paul says that God "**hath blessed us**," he's talking about God acting graciously toward us.

We bless God with **praise**.

God blesses us by **giving**.

We speak well of God because God has done good toward us.

And notice the tense:

"Who hath blessed us."

Paul doesn't say, "Who might bless us."

He doesn't say, "Who will consider blessing us if we behave ourselves."

He says God **has** blessed us.

This is something God has already done for those who are in Christ.

That doesn't mean we have already experienced the final fulfilment of every promise. We're still waiting for the resurrection of the body. We're still waiting for Christ's return. We're still waiting for the full manifestation of our inheritance.

But our **position** has already been established.

The inheritance belongs to us because we belong to Christ.

The Immediate Context

Ephesians 1:3 begins a long section of praise that continues through verse 14.

In the original Greek, verses 3 through 14 form one extended sentence. Paul begins praising God, and then the blessings seem to pour out one after another.

Chosen in Christ	Adoption	Acceptance	Redemption through Christ's blood
Forgiveness	Receiving an inheritance	Hearing the gospel	Sealed with the Holy Spirit

So when Paul says we have received **"all spiritual blessings,"** he doesn't leave us wondering what those blessings are. He begins listing them.

Ephesians 1:4 says: **"According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world."**

Verse 5 speaks about: **"The adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself."**

Verse 6 says we have been: **"Accepted in the beloved."**

Verse 7 says: **"In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace."**

Then verses 13 and 14 tell us that believers are sealed with the Holy Spirit, who is the earnest, or guarantee, of our inheritance.

These are the spiritual blessings Paul has in mind.

He isn't mainly talking about a better job, a larger house, more money, or an easier life.

God certainly cares about our physical needs. Jesus taught us to pray for our daily bread. But Ephesians 1:3 is talking about blessings far greater than temporary comfort.

Paul is talking about everything connected with **salvation, reconciliation, sonship, forgiveness, eternal life, the Holy Spirit, resurrection,** and our **inheritance in Christ.**

Blessed With All Spiritual Blessings

The Greek word translated "spiritual" is *pneumatikos*.

It refers to that which belongs to, comes from, or is produced by the **Spirit of God**.

This doesn't mean the blessings are imaginary.

It doesn't mean they're merely feelings.

And it doesn't mean physical life is unimportant.

Spiritual blessings are real blessings given to us through the work of the Holy Spirit.

Forgiveness is real.

Adoption is real.

The presence of the Holy Spirit is real.

Our union with Christ is real.

Our future resurrection is real.

Our inheritance is real.

Paul says we have received **"all"** spiritual blessings.

Not some.

Not a small starter package while the really spiritual Christians receive the premium version.

Every believer who is in Christ has access to the same spiritual foundation.

Some believers understand these blessings more clearly than others.

Some walk in them more faithfully than others.

Some enjoy the assurance of them more consistently than others.

But no believer has a better Christ, a better cross, a better gospel, or a better Holy Spirit.

First Corinthians 1:30 says: **"But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption."**

Everything we need begins with Christ.

Second Peter 1:3 says: **"According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness."**

Once again, notice the tense.

He "hath given."

God isn't withholding Christ from us while waiting for us to become worthy.

Christ is the gift from which every other blessing flows.

Where the Story of Blessing Begins

The theme of blessing begins near the opening pages of the Bible.

Genesis 1:27 and 28 says: "**So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them.**"

Blessing was part of God's **original intention** for humanity.

God created mankind in His image, gave them life, gave them fruitfulness, and gave them authority within creation.

But sin brought the **curse**.

Adam and Eve believed the serpent rather than God. Instead of trusting God's goodness, they reached for something outside His command.

The result was shame, separation, pain, death, and exile from Eden.

Blessing was lost through rebellion.

But God didn't abandon His purpose.

In Genesis 12:2 and 3, God said to Abraham: "**And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.**"

God promised that blessing would come to **all nations** through Abraham.

But how would that happen?

Galatians 3:16 gives us the answer: "**Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.**"

The promised blessing comes through **Christ**.

That's why Ephesians 1:3 doesn't merely say God has blessed us.

It says He has blessed us "**in Christ**."

Blessing Under the Old Covenant

Under the old covenant, blessing was often connected with Israel's life in the **promised land**.

Deuteronomy 28 describes blessings involving crops, livestock, families, protection, rain, victory, and national prosperity.

Deuteronomy 28:2 says: "**And all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God.**"

Israel's blessings were tied to **covenant obedience**.

If they trusted God and walked in His ways, they enjoyed life in the land.

If they rejected God and turned to idols, they came under covenant judgment.

The promised land itself became a picture of inheritance, rest, and dwelling in God's provision.

But Israel repeatedly failed.

They received the law but broke it.

They entered the land but turned to idols.

They had the temple but corrupted its worship.

They had priests but often had unfaithful shepherds.

They had kings but many of those kings led them away from God.

Something greater was needed.

A better
covenant.

A better
sacrifice.

A better
priest.

A better king.

A better inheritance.

The Priestly Blessing

Numbers 6:24 through 26 records the blessing the priests were commanded to speak over Israel:

"The LORD bless thee, and keep thee:
The LORD make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee:
The LORD lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace."

Think about what's contained in that blessing.



God's protection.



God's favour.



God's grace.



God's presence.



God's peace.

The people were being blessed through the ministry of the priesthood.

But **Jesus is now our great High Priest.**

Hebrews 4:14 says: "**Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God.**"

The Old Priests

- Entered an earthly tabernacle
- Offered the blood of animals
- Repeatedly offered sacrifices

Jesus

- Entered heaven itself
- Offered His own blood
- Offered one sacrifice for sins forever

Because our High Priest is in heaven, our blessing is now connected with heaven.

That brings us to Paul's next phrase.

In Heavenly Places

Ephesians 1:3 says that these blessings are: **"In heavenly places."**

The word "places" is supplied in English to make the phrase read naturally.

The expression could be translated **"in the heavenlies"** or **"in the heavenly realm."**

Paul uses this phrase several times in Ephesians.

Ephesians 1:20 says that God raised Christ from the dead and: **"Set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places."**

Ephesians 2:6 says God: **"Hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus."**

Ephesians 3:10 speaks about principalities and powers: **"In heavenly places."**

Ephesians 6:12 speaks about spiritual wickedness: **"In high places."**

The same basic expression is being used.

So the heavenly realm isn't presented as an imaginary place where nothing difficult happens.

It's the realm of **spiritual authority, spiritual conflict, spiritual inheritance**, and **Christ's present reign**.

Christ has been raised and seated above every principality and power.

And because we're united with Christ, our spiritual position is connected with His position.

We're still physically living on earth.

We still face temptation.

We still experience suffering.

We still have bodies that get tired, sick, and older. Some mornings, simply getting out of bed feels like an act of spiritual warfare.

But our true identity is no longer determined by this fallen age.

Our life is connected with the **risen Christ**.

Colossians 3:1 through 3 says: **"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God."**

Our blessings are heavenly because their source is the risen Christ.

The Importance of "In Christ"

The final two words of Ephesians 1:3 are the key to the entire verse: **"In Christ."**

Paul repeatedly uses expressions such as "in Christ," "in him," "in whom," and "in the beloved" throughout Ephesians 1.

- We're chosen in Him.
- We're accepted in Him.
- We have redemption in Him.
- We have forgiveness in Him.
- We receive an inheritance in Him.
- We're sealed with the Holy Spirit after hearing and believing the gospel of Christ.

God's blessings aren't handed out separately from His Son.

God hasn't placed salvation in a religious system.

He hasn't placed it in human goodness.

He hasn't placed it in ceremonies.

He hasn't placed it in our ability to maintain a flawless record.

He has placed everything in Christ.

First John 5:11 and 12 says: **"And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life."**

The blessing is found in the Son.

This is where Adam's failure and Christ's victory become so important.

Adam brought sin, condemnation, and death.

Christ brings righteousness, justification, and life.

First Corinthians 15:22 says: **"For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."**

Humanity naturally belongs to Adam's fallen family.

But through faith, we're joined to Christ.

From Adam's condemnation into Christ's righteousness.	From Adam's death into Christ's life.
From the old creation into the new creation.	From the curse into blessing.

Christ Became a Curse for Us

How can guilty sinners receive the blessing of God?

Does God simply ignore sin?

Does He pretend rebellion doesn't matter?

No.

The answer is found at the **cross**.

Galatians 3:13 and 14 says: "**Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.**"

That passage connects several major biblical themes.

01	02	03
The curse of the law.	The death of Christ.	The blessing promised to Abraham.
04	05	
The inclusion of the Gentiles.	And the promise of the Holy Spirit.	

Jesus bore the curse so we could receive the blessing.

He took the judgment we deserved.

He shed His blood for the forgiveness of sins.

He rose from the dead.

He ascended into heaven.

And He poured out the promised Holy Spirit.

So when Paul says we have been blessed with all spiritual blessings, those blessings didn't come cheaply.

They came through the **blood of Christ**.

Ephesians 1:7 says: "**In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.**"

Our blessings aren't based on God lowering His standard.

They're based on Christ **fulfilling righteousness, bearing the curse, defeating death, and bringing us into the new covenant.**

The Promise of the Holy Spirit

Galatians 3:14 says that through Christ: "**We might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.**"

This helps explain what Paul means by "spiritual blessings."

The greatest gift of the new covenant isn't simply that God gives us better circumstances.

God gives us His Spirit.

Ezekiel 36:26 and 27 promised: "**A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes.**"

Joel 2:28 promised: "**And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh.**"

Jesus told His disciples that the Father would send the Comforter.

Then, on the Day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit was poured out.

The promise had arrived.

Ephesians 1:13 says: "**After that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise.**"

The Holy Spirit is both a **present blessing** and the **guarantee** of what's still to come.

Ephesians 1:14 calls Him: "**The earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession.**"

An **earnest** is a deposit or guarantee.

God has given us His Spirit as the assurance that He'll complete what He has begun.

We haven't yet received the full inheritance.

Our bodies haven't yet been raised.

Creation hasn't yet been fully restored.

Death hasn't yet been removed from human experience.

But the Holy Spirit is God's guarantee that the rest is coming.

From the Promised Land to the Heavenly Inheritance

Israel received an earthly inheritance in Canaan.

Joshua led them into the land.

But even that rest wasn't the final rest.

Hebrews 4:8 and 9 says: **"For if Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day. There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God."**

The name "Jesus" in that verse refers to Joshua, which reflects the same Hebrew name.

Joshua brought Israel into an earthly inheritance.

Jesus Christ brings His people into the true and lasting inheritance.

First Peter 1:3 and 4 says: **"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you."**

Notice how similar Peter's words are to Ephesians 1:3.

Peter begins: **"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."**

Then he speaks about new birth, resurrection, hope, and an inheritance reserved in heaven.

The Earthly Inheritance

- The Israelites could lose crops.
- Enemies could invade the land.
- Cities could be destroyed.
- The temple could be burned.
- The people could be carried into exile.

Our Inheritance in Christ

- It can't decay.
- It can't be polluted.
- It can't lose its value.
- It can't be stolen by an invading army.
- It's secured by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

But our inheritance in Christ is **incorruptible**.

Does This Mean Christians Won't Suffer?

This is where we need to balance the teaching.

Being blessed with all spiritual blessings doesn't mean believers won't suffer.

Paul wrote Ephesians while imprisoned.

That's worth thinking about.

The man declaring that he possessed every spiritual blessing was sitting in chains.

Apparently, Paul didn't measure God's blessing by personal comfort.

He knew he was forgiven.

He knew he was accepted.

He knew he belonged to Christ.

He knew he had received the Holy Spirit.

He knew resurrection was coming.

He knew his inheritance was secure.

And Roman chains couldn't take any of that away.

Second Corinthians 4:17 and 18 says: **"For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen."**

Paul wasn't denying the reality of suffering.

He was comparing **temporary suffering** with **eternal glory**.

Our spiritual blessings don't mean every earthly problem disappears.

They mean no earthly problem can separate us from what God has given us in Christ.

Are We Supposed to Ask God to Bless Us?

Since Ephesians 1:3 says God has already blessed us, should we stop asking for His blessing?

No.

Scripture still teaches us to pray for daily provision, wisdom, healing, protection, strength, and help.

Jesus taught us to pray: **"Give us this day our daily bread."**

James tells us: **"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God."**

Paul regularly prayed for believers.

But notice what Paul often prayed for in Ephesians.

He didn't pray that God would decide whether to give them spiritual blessings.

He prayed that they would **understand** what they had already received.

Ephesians 1:17 and 18 says: **"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: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling."**

Paul wanted their eyes opened.

The blessings were already theirs in Christ, but they needed spiritual understanding to live in the reality of them.

We can own something legally and still live as though we don't have it.

A believer can be forgiven
yet continue living under condemnation.

A believer can be accepted in Christ
yet constantly try to earn God's acceptance.

A believer can have the Holy Spirit
yet neglect prayer, Scripture, fellowship, and obedience.

A believer can have a heavenly inheritance
yet spend every waking hour chasing things that won't last.

The answer isn't to earn more of Christ.

The answer is to **know Christ, trust Christ,** and **walk in what God has already given us through Him.**

What This Means for Our Identity

Ephesians 1:3 changes the way we see ourselves.

Our identity isn't determined by our worst failure.

It isn't determined by what other people have called us.

It isn't determined by our financial position.

It isn't determined by our health.

It isn't determined by our past.

For those who have believed the gospel, **our identity is now found in Christ.**

That doesn't mean our behaviour no longer matters.

Ephesians spends its first three chapters explaining what God has done for us.

Then chapter 4 begins: **"I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called."**

Grace establishes our position.

Then grace teaches us how to walk.

We don't obey so we can get into Christ.

We obey because, through faith, we're in Christ.

We don't pursue holiness to purchase spiritual blessings.

We pursue holiness because God has blessed us, called us, adopted us, forgiven us, and given us His Spirit.

What This Means When We Feel Condemned

There will be days when we don't feel blessed.

We'll remember something we did years ago.

We'll see our present weaknesses.

We'll compare ourselves with someone who seems to have everything together.

Although, to be honest, the person who appears to have everything together usually doesn't. They've simply learned where to point the camera.

Our feelings change.

Our circumstances change.

Our performance can be inconsistent.

But the work of Christ doesn't change.

When condemnation comes, we return to what God has said.

We have redemption through Christ's blood.

We have forgiveness according to the riches of His grace.

We're accepted in the beloved.

We have been sealed with the Holy Spirit.

We have an inheritance.

This isn't an excuse to ignore sin.

If we sin, we confess it.

We turn from it.

We rely upon our Advocate.

First John 2:1 says: **"And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."**

Our assurance isn't based on pretending we never fail.

Our assurance is based on **Jesus Christ the righteous.**

What This Means for Prayer and Worship

Ephesians 1:3 begins with worship: **"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."**

Paul's response to blessing was praise.

Sometimes our prayers become a list of everything we don't have.

There's nothing wrong with bringing our needs to God. He tells us to do that.

But Ephesians 1 reminds us to begin by remembering what He has already given.

We can thank God that we're chosen in Christ.

We can thank Him that we're adopted.

We can thank Him that we're accepted.

We can thank Him for redemption.

We can thank Him for forgiveness.

We can thank Him for the Holy Spirit.

We can thank Him for the hope of resurrection.

We can thank Him for an inheritance that can't fade away.

When we understand Ephesians 1:3, worship stops being empty religious language.

We bless God because He has blessed us beyond anything we could have earned.

The Verse Behind the Verse

So what's behind Ephesians 1:3?

- Behind it is the blessing God gave at creation.
- Behind it is the curse that entered through Adam's sin.
- Behind it is the promise that all nations would be blessed through Abraham's seed.
- Behind it is Israel's covenant blessing in the promised land.
- Behind it is the priestly blessing of God's grace, presence, and peace.
- Behind it is the promise of a new heart and the Holy Spirit.
- Behind it is the failure of the old creation and the promise of a new one.
- Behind it is the cross where Christ bore the curse.
- Behind it is the resurrection where Christ defeated death.
- Behind it is the ascension where Christ was seated in heavenly places.
- Behind it is Pentecost where the promised Spirit was poured out.

And running through all of it are the words: **"In Christ."**

Every spiritual blessing comes through Him.	Every promise finds its answer in Him.	Every shadow finds its substance in Him.
Every sacrifice points to Him.	Every hope of resurrection rests upon Him.	Every claim to forgiveness depends upon His blood.
And every expectation of eternal inheritance is secured by His victory.		

Conclusion

Let's read Ephesians 1:3 one more time:

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

Paul isn't telling us to chase spiritual blessings as though God has hidden them from us.

He's telling us to recognise what God has already provided in His Son.

We have forgiveness.	We have acceptance.	We have adoption.	We have redemption.
We have the Holy Spirit.	We have hope.	We have an inheritance.	

And we have all of it **in Christ**.

Our circumstances may change.

Our feelings may rise and fall.

Our bodies may weaken.

Our possessions may disappear.

But what God has given us in Christ is **anchored in heaven, secured by His blood, confirmed by His resurrection, and guaranteed by the Holy Spirit**.

That's why Paul begins with praise:

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."

God has blessed us in the only place where every blessing is safe, complete, and eternal.

He has blessed us in Christ.