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Ephesians 1:3  
Spiritual Blessings in Christ

Today we're moving along in our Ephesians study and will be looking at Ephesians chapter 1 verse 3. Which reads "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavens in Christ".

There is no way we could ever do more than this verse in one day. I know we spent three weeks on the last verse, but this verse demands at least one week in and of itself.

This verse has to do with blessings. It has to do with us receiving blessings. It has to do with very specific blessings, and a very specific way in which we inherit those blessings. The reference here to blessings that we receive in Christ is very specific. Its not just whatever blessing you might happen to imagine.

Once again, you cannot understand Christ as the fulfillment of anything unless you understand what he is supposed to be fulfilling. If you don't understand Paul's reference to blessing here as the specific blessings spoken of primarily to the Fathers', then this word "blessings" can and will mean whatever blessings happen to come to your mind. And generally we will make them earthly, natural, and self-centered.

A little over a hundred years ago, If I walked up to you and said this little equation  $E = mc^2$  you would probably tell me to see a doctor. But if your entire life you had been searching, waiting, hoping with certainty, that somehow you would come to know an equation that expresses an equivalence between energy and mass in direct proportion to the square of the speed of light in a vacuum...well then....that little equation would mean a whole lot to you. In fact, that equation would be the fulfillment of all that you had given your life to search for.

What's my point? My point is that everything that Jesus came and fulfilled was something that was promised, prophesied, and spoken of for thousands of years. It was something that Israel had spent entire lifetimes hoping, searching, waiting for with confident expectation. The New Testament authors were simply not just randomly choosing words and assigning them to Christ. They were ALWAYS gathering up the realities of what was already spoken, that which Israel had been desiring and expecting, and then showing it to be a finished reality in Christ.

Christ was the how and the what and the when and the where of everything they had been promised. But again, if you don't know what was promised, you simply cannot know how he is the reality and fullness of it. IF you don't know what you're

looking for, you don't really recognize the solution. I remember seeing a bumper sticker or hearing someone say once - "if Jesus is the answer, what is the question?"

This word "blessing" spoken by Paul in Ephesians chapter 1 is not a word that he, or any Israelite, was unfamiliar with. Its not a word that he just came up with to try to describe how nice Jesus made him feel. Its not like the way we use the word "blessing" today. You know, "count your blessings"...and by that we mean natural things that make us happy in our natural lives.

No, Paul wasn't talking about anything natural here. In fact, Paul says these are spiritual blessings. But they are specific blessings. There was two thousand years of recorded history in the Bible speaking of very specific blessings to come. These blessings were promised. They were prophesied. And they were demonstrated in type and shadow through a number of Old Covenant individuals, situations, stories.

And it is **these** very specific blessings that Paul now tells us three things about. First he tells us that they are, in fact, spiritual, and not earthly. "Every *spiritual* blessing..." If we in the church could just understand that much, it would be a huge improvement, because most of us still look for them in the realm of the testimony rather than the realm of the fulfillment. Most of us would love to hear that they are natural, temporal things for our natural temporal bodies. When, in fact, they are spiritual and eternal which is far, far greater.

Second, he demands that they are ours in the heavens, in Christ. So we have the nature and character of the blessings, and now we have the **place and person** of the blessings mentioned here. These blessings are ours **IN CHRIST**. They are not just ours because of Christ. They are not just ours "thanks to Christ". They are ours in Christ, that is in and by sharing the very life of Christ. You could say that they are in fact Christ's blessings, and we share in them as we come to share Him as our life. These blessings are not things that Christ gives you. These blessings are inherent in Christ Himself being given to you. You cannot separate the blessings from the one who is blessed forever. And now you "you have died and are hidden with Christ in God". And that is the place and person of our blessings. Everything that God has given us, he foreordained, then promised to His Son, then gave to His Son in the resurrection where we were joined with Him, and now are ours by **participation in Him**. God will give you nothing apart from His Son. But God has given you all things in and as His Son. Why? So that no flesh can glory. That it is now Christ all and in all.

[Eph 3:6](#) for the nations to be joint-heirs, and a joint-body and joint-sharers of His promise in Christ through the gospel,

Ok, that was secondly.

Now thirdly, we also have the time of experiencing these blessings. "who HAS blessed us with every spiritual blessing". There's the time of it. Like all things of salvation, it is now in Christ. Its not future in heaven. Its actually, quite literally in this verse, **now** in heaven in Christ. Now if that challenges your understanding of heaven, then let it. Because heaven is far greater than a futuristic "Never-Never-Land" where you will go when you die. "Somewhere over the rainbow"...right next to the pot of gold. It is true that the reality of heaven awaits death. But that is not the death of your body. It is where you are taken in Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection. Your death does not prepare the way for you to go there. His death

prepared the way, and He brought you there in Himself, through His death and His resurrection, into His Father's house. And every verse of the New Testament will have you raised up there now, seated with Him now, experiencing that reality now, that citizenship, and experiencing what has been laid up for you since the foundation of the world. Read John 14.

In fact, Paul is going to tell us even beyond this in chapter 2 verse 5-6 that we were "made alive together with Christ, raised up together, and made to sit together, in the heavens, in Christ." But we'll get to that.

First of all, I want to just show you from some places in the Old Testament, that what Paul is doing here is taking the specific promised blessings of God, the promised blessings that go all the way back to Abraham, and he is saying that those very blessings, those very promises are now ours in the heavens in Christ.

Now the primary place where you want to look with regards to these blessings is in the story of Abraham. But its bigger than even the blessings promised to Abraham. There are other blessings promised to the people of God which Christ Himself becomes as well. But the first time that God begins to speak with regards to blessing is with Abraham.

God begins to promise this blessing to Abraham way back in chapter 12 of Genesis. The very blessings that Paul is saying are ours in Christ, were promised first to Abraham. And these blessings had to do with greatness, but the greatness would always be the RESULT of the increase of the coming Seed.

You see, God promised to Abraham a seed. Which was Isaac in the flesh, but came be fulfilled in Christ. The true promised Seed. If you aren't familiar with that part of Scripture, I'd recommend that you spend some time reading Genesis. Start in Genesis 12. We obviously don't have time to recount the entire story. But God promises Abraham a seed, a son, through whom all of the earth would be blessed.

Well, here again we have types and shadows, promises and prophecies. We have an earthly picture of a spiritual reality. We have a natural son pointing to a spiritual Son. Jason, how do you know that Isaac, the seed promised to Abraham, was really speaking of Christ, and us in Christ.

**Gal 3:16** But the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his Seed. It does not say, And to seeds, as of many, but as of one, "And to your Seed," which is Christ.

**Gal 3:19** Why then the Law? It was added because of transgressions, until the Seed should come *to those* to whom it had been promised,

**Gal 3:27** For as many as were baptized into Christ, you put on Christ. **28** There cannot be Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is no male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. **29** And if you *are* Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise.

Isaac demonstrated in the earth a chosen Son, a seed of promise, through whom the entire earth would be blessed. That is what God spoke to Abraham. God began speaking of a blessing. A blessing for Him and for the entire world through the Seed. Remember, Paul is gathering up **this** blessing and saying that it is yours in Christ.

Well, what was the nature of this blessing that was promised. Well, it was multifaceted, but it all had to do with the increase of the seed.

1. It had to do with being taken out of one land, one kindred, and one father's house, and made to dwell in another. In the land that would be given to the Seed.
2. It had to do with the increase of the Seed unto a blessing made available to all the families of the nations.
3. It had to do with gaining a great name, a new name.
4. It had to do with possessing the gates of his enemies.
5. It had to do with an increase of the seed...like the stars in the sky and the sand on the seashore. And, incidentally, that doesn't just speak of numbers of people. That's not a head-count. That is the increased expression, the greatness of the one Seed in man.
6. It had to do with God establishing an everlasting covenant between Himself and this Seed throughout all generations, and that through this covenant there would be a great inheritance and an everlasting possession.

These are just some of the facets of the blessings spoken of to Abraham. Abraham says "God can you describe this blessing to me?". God says "Ok...Abraham, you will be taken out of one whole land, kindred, and father's house, and made to dwell in the land of your Seed".

Abraham says "is there more?". God says yes, much more. Through the increase of your seed there will be victory over all enemies. There will be increased greatness. There will be a blessing that extends to the ends of the earth, there will be an everlasting covenant, a great inheritance, an eternal possession. Abraham, **that is the blessing that I'm promising you**". That is what I'm saying is going to be yours THROUGH THE SEED. It's a very specific blessing. Its not just whatever you think would be nice. "

Abraham says "wow God...could you throw in a new camel and some sunglasses?".

God says "this blessing isn't **something** that you dream up. It is someone that I have foreknown, and am granting to a people who will live in Him".

"Wow, God...that is quite a blessing that you're promising here. How can all of this happen through one seed, one son, one child?"

"Abraham, here's how. Your son of promise, speaks of my Son of promise. Your seed that comes out of your wife's dead womb, is truly my Seed that comes out of the dead womb of the earth. Abraham, your seed that you will begin to sacrifice on Mount Moriah, will be a picture of my Seed whom I will truly sacrifice on the same mountain in years to come. Abraham, the increase of your seed in the natural, speaks of the increased expression and greatness of My Son, My Seed. Abraham, your seed will one day be brought out of Egypt by the blood of the Lamb. But my Seed will bring a people out of death by the true blood of the lamb. Abraham, your seed will have victory through their king over the enemies of their land, My seed will also set up his Kingdom and put all of His enemies under His feet".

"Abraham, your seed speaks of My Seed. Your son, speaks of My Son. And the promises that I am making through your seed, will come to be yes and amen in my

**Son. The blessings that I am swearing to you through your seed, will be given to those who dwell in my Seed."**

"You see Abraham, I am speaking of, and will fulfill to you, all of the blessings that I am promising. I will first do it in the natural through Isaac. I will later do it in the spiritual through Jesus the Christ. I will first do it in the earth, I will soon make it real in the heavens. Your natural seed will increase. Your natural seed will have victory. Your natural seed will make a covenant with me. But I promise you this, one day that will all have fulfillment and reality in my Seed, My Son, my Anointed One. And it will not be natural, it will be spiritual. And it will not be the earth, it will be the realm of the heavens.

Ok, now go back to Ephesians 1:3 and listen again to this sentence. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who **has** blessed us with **every spiritual blessing in the heavens in Christ**".

Here we have everything of the blessing promised now made real, now made eternal, now made substance in the person of Christ. Paul is, in essence, saying that these blessings spoken to Abraham, are realized eternally, realized spiritually, realized fully, in the One in whom you have been made to dwell.

But its not just any old blessing. You see, the natural mind, without any reference to the blessings promised, starts to claim blessings willy-nilly from God without any reference to the testimony. Its money, it's a car, its giftings its stuff we want from the earth. We "stand on that Scripture about blessing" and make it have reference to whatever we can imagine. But its not according to our imagination. Its according to the testimony. Its according to the pattern proclaimed to Abraham, demonstrated through Isaac, and fulfilled in Christ.

And its not only the blessings spoken to Abraham that Paul is gathering up here and showing to be in Christ. He's gathering up **all** of the testimony with regards to the blessings. I won't get into much detail, but we also have reference here to the blessing of the firstborn that Jacob took from Esau. The blessing that Isaac passed along onto the one with the birthright. That too is fulfilled in spirit, in Christ. A blessing that has to do with an eternal inheritance. I'll leave that alone.

There's are also blessings spoken of to Israel to those who would keep covenant with their God. Those who would walk in the covenant that He established. Choose this day life or death, a blessing or a curse. And they had to chose that day what they wanted. There are blessings associated with dwelling in the land, and all that that would mean.

I think that primarily Paul is speaking with reference to the blessings promised to Abraham, because really in those promises everything else is summed up. But I just want you to see what Paul is saying here. He's not saying the word "blessing" and leaving it up to the readers imagination to invent what that means. He is taking a specific word, spoken to a specific man, about a specific reality, and saying that **THAT HAS** been given to us in Christ Jesus.

**Gal 3:13** Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us (for it is written, "Cursed *is* everyone having been hanged on a tree"); **14 so that the blessing of Abraham might be given to the nations in Jesus Christ.**

That is the same thing Paul says in Ephesians 1:3. The spiritual blessings have been given to us in the heavens in Christ Jesus. Notice the tense of the word there. These are not blessings we are waiting for. These may be blessings that we are waiting to experience, grow up in, walk in the fullness of, or manifest. But these are not blessings that await us in a future geographic location called Heaven.

No friends, these blessings HAVE been given to us in the heavens, in Christ Jesus. All that God promised, He made good on in the person of His Son. We, the church, who neither understand the blessings or the reality of being now in His Son, so often push off into the future what we have not come to see now in Him. But to do that is not only to contradict this verse, but is to contradict the very reality and heartbeat of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

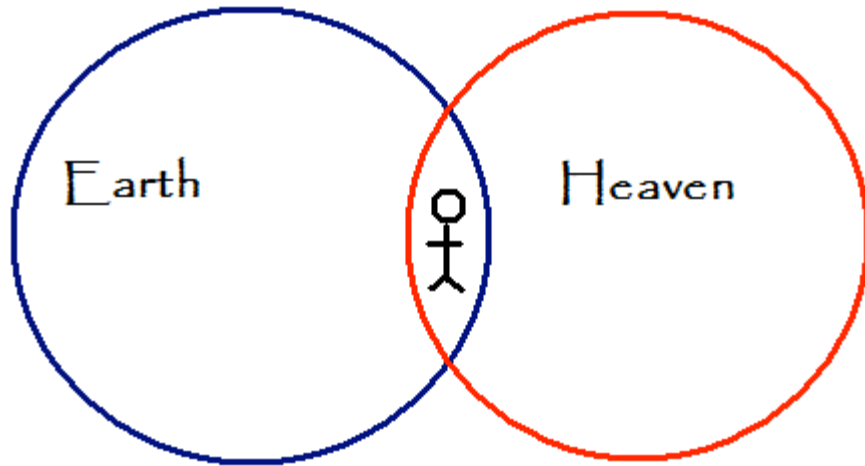
Paul is adamant about something here. He's adamant that not only have some of the blessings spoken of been given to us in the person of Christ, but that EVERY blessing that God ever planned and promised has been accomplished and granted to you through and in the person of Jesus Christ. Every conceivable thing that the Father planned and promised, everything of blessing has been accomplished by Jesus Christ, and must be revealed in you by the Spirit of God. There is nothing of God's eternal purpose that has not been accomplished and given to you in the person of Jesus Christ.

**Eph 3:11** According to the eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord:

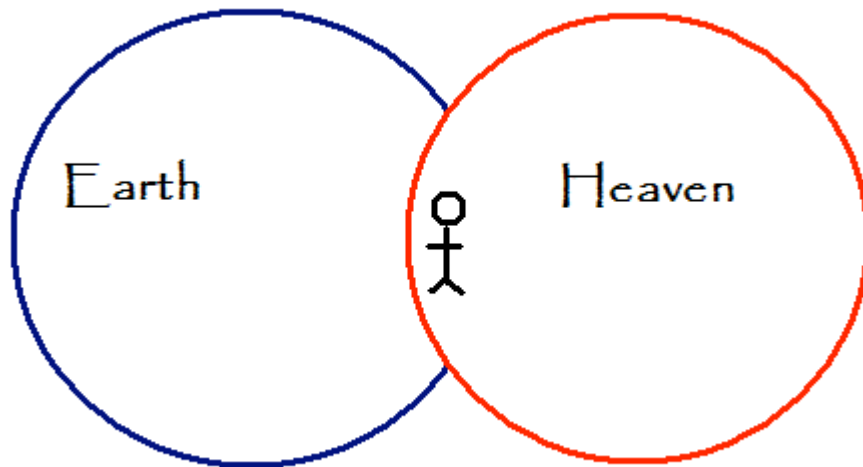
What is Paul talking about? Paul is talking about a finished work, a finished salvation ready to be revealed. Paul is talking about promises fulfilled and given in the person of Jesus Christ who is your very life, if you have been born of His Spirit. Paul is talking about God's eternal purpose accomplished in His Son, that MUST be revealed in you by His Spirit.

So just to review. The Blessings are specific, they are the ones promised in the Old Testament. The fulfillment is comprehensive and full, and has been finished and given to you and in Christ. The time is now, the eternal now of Christ. The day of the Lord. And we'll end by talking a bit more about the where. The where is the heavens. Some of your translations may read simply heaven. Some may read "heavenly places". You'll notice that the word "places" is in italics which means it has been added to the original manuscript.

When you are born again....



And after your body dies....



What is heaven? Well, this might stretch some of you. But heaven is not just a geographic location, at least not as we understand geographic locations. Heaven can be called a place, as long as you understand that place to be a person in Whom you have been made to dwell. Heaven can be called a city, as long as you understand that Paul tells us that we have now come in Christ to live in and be citizens of that heavenly city. Heaven can be called the Father's House, as long as you understand dwelling in the Father's House to be dwelling in the Father Himself in the person and redemption of His Son, and inheriting that House as a joint-heir with that Son.

Heaven is truly more of a realm of life and a reality of relationship than a geographic location. It's a relationship of union with Christ in the Father. You don't go to heaven to meet Jesus. You'll never find that in the Bible. You'll also never find a verse that says "when you die, you'll go to heaven". You are raised up now and seated with Christ in the heavens. Your body, for some years, remains on the earth.

Your soul is already seated in this place, in this person, in this realm of life, in this Father's House. And the Spirit is trying to reveal where you are.

I am not denying that you will live forever in the heavens with Christ after the body dies. But I am denying that the death of the body is the beginning of the heavens. Heaven is the spiritual reality in Christ that the earth could only point to, but never provide. Heaven is a rest from all mans labors and pains and works, but living by and in the Son, and dwelling in the Father.

I am in the Father, you are in Me, and I am in you.

Heaven is a kingdom, as long as you understand that the king reigns in the midst of His people. Heaven is a city, as long as you understand that you are the living stones of that city and He is the light. Heaven is a relationship, as long as you understand that relationship to be dead unto sin and alive unto God in Christ Jesus. Heaven is a marriage, as long as you understand that union to be a bride taken out of the side, the rib, of the Man who was pierced. Heaven is a family, as long as you understand that family to be one that shares one Spirit, and is one body with one Head. Heaven is glory, as long as you understand that glory is the magnificent manifestation and expression of the living God in midst of His people. Heaven is Mt Zion, as long as you realize that that is not a mountain in the Middle East, but is the place where God has come to dwell with man in Christ. Heaven is a tabernacle, as long as you understand it is one with the veil rent, and that we live beyond the veil. Heaven is a new creation, as long as you can see that that is not just bigger trees and unpolluted rivers. It is a all that trees and rivers and food and water spoke of in the Person of Jesus Christ – the true food, the true drink, the true tree of Life.

Yes, heaven is where you and I will spend eternal life. But eternal life is a Person in whom we live and move and have our being. And if we will only allow the Spirit of God to show us, we will find out just how real and present heaven is.