

"time" of it. The word "foundation" refers to the laying of a foundation. Such is the concern here. Hence, the choice antedates Genesis 1-3. Similar phrases are used in the New Testament (cf. John 17:24; 1 Pet. 1:20; Matt. 25:34; Luke 11:50; Heb. 4:3; 9:26; Eph. 3:9).

c. It is in sanctification

The two words used in the text speak volumes: holy and without blame. They show at once that election is not to get one to heaven, although that is surely a part of it all, but to get moral excellence. The word "holy" really means separation and therefore a difference. God expects chosen ones to be different! "Blameless" is a sacrificial word and means without blemish or defect. Many are eager to go to heaven, but few are interested in being holy. That is the big lie about salvation as it is often presented. Election is related to lifestyle and that is holiness and blameless living. God have mercy upon us if we neglect these truths.

NOTE: Some salient points on election include these:

1. It is in reference to individuals and not nations. 2. Holiness is not the reason for election, but the very purpose of it. Election did not see something good in us, but had as its goal our holiness. 3. God does everything after the counsel of His own will. All the details of His work were done before we were created. There is no possibility of failure or change of purpose. This is a strong ground for confidence and comfort. 4. Grace was given long before we were created or had done good or bad, hence the matter of works is excluded. This produces genuine humility. 5. To claim election and live in sin is a contradiction. He has called us unto a life of separation unto Himself (John 15:19; 17:16).

Conclusion Life on the highest plane is lived when one enjoys the blessings God has provided for him. One of these blessings is to know His choice unto holiness and blamelessness. May we make our election sure before men and God (2 Pet. 1:10).

THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS

"Blessings In Christ"  
Ephesians 1:3, 4

Introduction

1. This is a letter to the church of Jesus Christ. Its cyclical character emphasizes the unity of the body of Christ. While it is true that the letter was directed to Ephesus, it was not limited to this one assembly.
2. Here is a personal letter from Paul to the churches. It came from his prison experience in Rome (3:1; 4:1; 6:20). From his deep trial there, he wrote this magnificent letter concerning life on its highest plane.
3. Paul does not hesitate in his introductory remarks to get down to the very core of his message; the blessings of God for those who belong to Christ. It is one long sentence which is employed to commence the letter (vv. 3-14). The KJV translators sought to unravel this complex and involved sentence and placed periods within it (vv. 6, 12, 14). These are natural breaks and help to decipher the truths presented.
4. The three sections noted give accent to the past (vv. 3-6), the present (vv. 7-12) and the future (vv. 13, 14). God's blessings for the believer are noted throughout. How generous He has been. Take a look at the sort of blessings provided and at one in detail:

1. BLESSINGS--Described v. 3.

a. Their origin

The subject of the verb "blessed" is the "God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." Here the possessive pronoun "our" is linked with the Lord Jesus Christ and not with the word Father (cf. v. 2). Earlier, therefore, the fatherhood of God with the believer is noted (cf. John 1:1-3; 3:3; Gal. 3:26), but here the concern is the fatherhood of God with the Son, the Lord Jesus (John 20:17). There is a unique way in which our Lord is related to the Father (John 3:16; Heb. 11:17). The intimacies of the Godhead will never be fully grasped. We believe them because the Bible speaks of them. It is

our sufficiency under trial, and our glorification at least in His presence. He is everything to us in the most real sense (1 Cor. 3:22, 23).

NOTE: In view of all of the above, there is a recorded doxology of praise: "blessed be..." Just like the Book of Psalms begins with "blessed" so does Ephesians. The Psalms encourage us to always be in the attitude of praise. So does Ephesians. Like Paul, we ought to be overcome with the deep emotion of gratitude rising with uninterrupted praise for what He has wrought in our behalf. We should glorify the Father, Son and Spirit for their part in the redemption we have in Christ. So be it!

## 2. BLESSINGS--Identified v. 4.

One of the most difficult concepts in the Word is the first one listed by Paul as a blessing for which to praise God. It is God's choice of believers. The preposition "according to" (v. 4) shows that this is why there is praise in the previous verse. It is "because of, inasmuch as, according to" what He has done in election. The verb here is aorist middle. The aorist commits the matter to a specific time and the middle shows personal interest. This is no dead doctrine without compassion. The reasons for such a choice are infinitely good, but hidden wholly within God Himself. The same verb is used for other choices (Luke 6:13; Acts 6:5; 5:22, 25). One can only respond with the person of praise by Paul elsewhere in thinking of this doctrine (Rom. 11:33). Now the choosing has some details provided:

### a. It is "in Christ"

All that has previously been noted about this pregnant phrase is repeated here. Christ is the first chosen one (Isa. 42:1-7) and we are chosen in Him. Ponder this on your knees. We did not choose Him, but He chose us. The doctrine always concerns only God's people. It is not right to apply it to others.

### b. It is in eternity

As Christ is the "place" of choice, this is the

wonderful the way Paul marks that He is "our" Lord Jesus Christ. This is what is meant when a personal relationship with Christ is advanced. No one really knows the Lord in this way except by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 11:3).

### b. Their reality

The aorist tense of the verb speaks volumes. The blessings are not strung out over a period of time, but given once and for all at the time of salvation. The single act of God indicates His profusion in spiritual giving. The time element is the point of new birth. God deals in bounty and this is credited to the aorist tense.

### c. Their nature

The word "spiritual blessings" has often been misunderstood. They are not spiritual as opposed to practical, material, or financial. Rather, the thought is that they are "spirit-bestowed." It is the Holy Spirit who proceeds from the Father and the Son and carries out this glorious work. He makes the whole operate. There are three cognates in this single verse with the root "bless." The completeness of these blessings is clear: "all." To detract from this is spiritual robbery. Some have made lists of the blessings, but really they are inexhaustible. We have "all things" in Him (1 Cor. 3:21, 22).

### d. Their sphere

1) In heavenly places. This phrase connotes both the origin and the nature of the blessings. All that is required for our spiritual lives is available. Just like air, etc. is needed for the earthly life, we have all provided for the spiritual life. The phrase is found five times in the book (1:3, 20; 2:6; 3:10; 6:12). Hence, all that is required for the heavenly state is provided.

2) In Christ. This adds the personal dimension to what has been noted. One's entire spiritual biography is related to the Son of God (Rom. 8:32). We breathe and enjoy the spiritual life because of Him. He is our alpha and omega; our crucifixion to the old and our resurrection to the new; our walk in newness of life and our access to the Father in prayer. Christ is our strength for service,