

EPHESIANS 1:2-4

2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, 4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him...

- I. “Who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,”
 - a. Notice we don’t have just “spiritual blessings” we have “every spiritual blessing”
 - i. And we don’t just have every blessing, we have every SPIRITUAL blessing. Why is this important? Because the Spiritual is where the substance is:
 1. **Colossians 2:16-17 (NASB)** 16 Therefore no one is to act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day-- 17 things which are a mere shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ.
 - a. **Substance** - soma (so'-mä) - that which casts a shadow as distinguished from the shadow itself
 - ii. We are taking the time to talk about this because the passages that we are going to review in Chapter 1, if we aren’t careful, can become focused on something **smaller** than what was intended by Paul.
 - iii. We must be careful to not allow ourselves to get overly focused on the “what” in this passage, we would do well to stay focused on the “Who”.
 - iv. Paul is going to be really deliberate and careful to make sure that the priority stays the priority in the upcoming passages.
 - v. He does this by using a couple of phrases, “**in Christ**”, “**in Him**”
 - vi. Notice too, how it is that we have this spiritual blessing: “**in Christ**”
 1. **Ephesians 1:3 (NLT)** All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms **because we are united with Christ.**
 - b. Paul is going to go on and lay out what some (certainly not all of the “every”) those blessings are:
 - i. **Ephesians 1:4 (NASB)** 4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be *holy and blameless* before Him.
 - ii. **Ephesians 1:5 (NASB)** In love 5 He predestined us to *adoption as sons* through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will,
 - iii. **Ephesians 1:7 (NASB)** 7 In Him we have *redemption* through His blood, the *forgiveness of our trespasses*, according to the riches of His grace
 - iv. **Ephesians 1:9 (NASB)** 9 He made known to us the *mystery of His will*, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him
 - v. **Ephesians 1:11 (NASB)** In Him 11 also *we have obtained an inheritance*, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will,

vi. **Ephesians 1:13 (NASB)** 13 In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation--having also believed, *you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise*,

vii. **Ephesians 1:17-20 (NASB)** 17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him. 18 I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, 19 and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might 20 which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places,

- c. The rest of Ephesians chapter 1 is Paul talking about these incredibly lofty spiritual blessings that you and I have and the ONLY reason that we can have them is because we are “in Christ”.

EPHESIANS 1:4

4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him...

- I. These next two verses are nearly impossible to read and understand what they are saying if one doesn't deliberately look at the text and engage it for what it says.
- a. In other words, read this text and do your best to not bring any of your preconceived ideas or paradigms to it. Why?
 - b. There are two words in verses 4 & 5 that come pre-loaded with meaning that can cloud how one sees this verse.
 - c. Those words are “chose” and “predestined”.
 - d. These are **not**, however, the **two most important words** in these verses. The two most important words in these verses are “in Him”.
 - e. Let's look at verse 4 again and start looking a bit deeper:
 - i. **4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him.**
 - ii. How many, when they either recite this verse or when they hear others recite this verse, say or hear: ***“just as He chose us before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him.”***
 1. Isn't interesting how many times we've said or heard this verse this way?
 2. The problem with taking the prepositional phrase “in Him” out of the sentence though is that we completely change the focus of the sentence.
 3. To give further clarity let's look at an example in a couple of sentences:
 - a. Example #1 - “All the basketball fans got a free pizza.”
 - b. Example #2 - “All the basketball fans, in section 105, got a free pizza.”
 4. The prepositional phrase, “in section 105” changes everything for the sentence. It is the same with “in Him” from verse 4 in Ephesians 1.
 5. Just like all the fans in our example of above getting free pizza, we see the person in verse 4 gets something undeserved as well.

6. As long as someone is “in Him” they will receive the ability to be “Holy and blameless before Him.”

1 Corinthians 1:8-9 (NLT) 8 He will keep you strong to the end so that you will be free from all blame on the day when our Lord Jesus Christ returns. 9 God will do this, for he is faithful to do what he says, and he has invited you into partnership with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Colossians 1:22 (NASB) yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach--

Ephesians 5:27 (NLT) that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless.

7. Whom did God choose to be “holy and blameless?” He chose those who are in His Son or “in Him” to be given this undeserved and unmerited status. How do we become “In Him?”

Ephesians 1:13-14 (NASB) 13 In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation--having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, 14 who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God’s own possession, to the praise of His glory.

John 3:16 (NASB) "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

John 5:24 (NASB) "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.

8. What this passage is saying is: “Before the foundations of the world, God decided that whomever would place their trust in His Son, those people would be presented holy and blameless before Him.”