

Auditorium Class

Ephesians- "The Believers' Riches in Christ"

Winter Quarter, 2013

Lesson I- Introduction; Blessings in Christ (1:3-14)

Key Verse: *"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"* (Eph 1:3)

This quarter we will be studying Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians. This is one of the letters of Paul referred to as the "Prison Epistles" since Paul wrote this while in prison in Rome (AD 61-63). Note how he refers to being in chains in Ephesians 3:1, 4:1 and 6:20 (reference Luke's account in Acts 28:16, 30-31) It is addressed to the "saints who are at Ephesus and who are faithful in Christ Jesus" (1:1). From our study of the book of Acts, we know that Paul visited Ephesus during his second missionary journey recorded in Acts 18:18-20. He returned to Ephesus during his third missionary journey and stayed for three years teaching in the local synagogue and in the school of Tyrannus (Acts 19).

Ephesus was one of the great cities on the SW coast of Asia Minor (modern day Turkey). It was a Roman capital that was a wealthy commercial center and home for the worship of the goddess Diana (Acts 19:23-41). People living in Ephesus and this region were faced with pagan worship, wealth and worldly influences that did not promote a belief and obedience in God.

Christians in Ephesus and surrounding areas were dear to Paul. In his letter to them, he addresses great themes that pertain to the Christian's position in Christ, as a member of the body of Christ, the church. Paul's desire for them was that they would know: What is the hope of God's calling (1:18); what are the glorious riches of God's inheritance in the saints (1:18); and what is God's great power toward those who believe (1:19).

In the first part of chapter 1, Paul discusses the riches (or blessings) of God's grace (1:7). These blessings include—

- He chose us (1:4)
- He adopted us (1:5)
- He redeemed us (1:7)
- He forgave us (1:7)
- He revealed the mystery of His will to us (1:9)
- He gathered us together in one body (1:10)
- He provided us with an inheritance (1:11)
- Sealed in Him with Holy Spirit of Promise (1:13)

Questions:

1. To whom is this epistle addressed? (1:1)
2. Where was Paul when he wrote this epistle?
3. For what three things did Paul pray that they might know? (1:15-19)
4. Why is God to be blessed (praised)? (1: 3)
5. What was the practice of early disciples in praising God (Acts 2:46-47)?
6. Name the spiritual blessings that Paul speaks of in Ephesians 1.
7. In addition to spiritual blessings, what other blessings do we find servants of God asking for in the scriptures? (Ps. 30:2-4; III John 2; II Sam. 12:22; Mt. 24:20; Rom. 1:10; Mt. 6:11; I Tim. 2:1-2; Ps. 122:6)
8. Paul says that we are chosen in Christ (1:4). Are there any conditions to being in Christ or are we predestined without action? (see Gal. 3:26, 27)
9. What are similarities between the spiritual adoption we read about in 1:5 and physical adoption of a child?
10. According to Paul, how are we redeemed (1:7)?
11. What is the mystery that Paul speaks of in 1:9 and how was it made known?
12. In addition to the spiritual blessings discussed by Paul, what do those in Christ obtain (1:11)?
13. What does Paul mean by "you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise" (1:13)?