

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, ***who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places***
…”
Ephesians 1:3 (ESV)

Paul begins with exuberant praise for the God who saved him from his sins, whom he serves. Reading through verses 3-14, it becomes clear this God of whom he speaks and glorifies is God the Father, God the Son (Jesus the Christ) and the Holy Spirit. He doesn’t attempt to explain the ‘Trinity’ as we have come to know it; Paul simply, extravagantly shares about the Father who initiated our salvation before creation, Jesus who executed the plan, and the Holy Spirit who continues the work of Jesus.

In the verse above, Paul states that in Jesus, God the Father has given us EVERY spiritual blessing in the heavenly places. This sounds wonderful, yet nebulous, cloudy and unclear. Reading through the rest of the passage reveals what these blessings are.

Predestination (4-6): Paul begins by declaring that God in HIS sovereignty predestined and chose us to be HIS before the creation. This begs questions about God’s sovereignty and our ‘Free Will.’ I accept this tension as one of the mysteries of God’s ways and move on. What we need to humbly recognize is how much God loves us, and HE is the one who **init iated**
our salvation, not us.

Redemption (7-8): Redemption relates to the infinite, eternal debt we owe for sinning, rebelling against our Creator. Our blessing of redemption comes through Jesus' blood sacrifice on our behalf. Notice Jesus' sacrifice is LAVISHED on us. God's mercy and redemption far exceeds our trespass against God.

Revelation (9-10): God goes further with His gifts by revealing to us what He is doing. In the past, God's purposes and will had been a mystery, yet now, as adopted sons and daughters of the GREAT I AM, we have become privy to the Father's intentions, through His word.

Inheritance (11-12): We receive this blessing of inheritance because God wanted us to receive it, not because we earned or deserved it. Our receipt of this blessing, or any blessing, is not solely for our benefit, but ultimately for God's glory. God receives glory because we are recipients of His mercy and grace and are lavished on by his blessing of eternal inheritance, which is the privilege of being forever in his presence.

Guarantee (13-14): The Holy Spirit living in us is the seal, promise and guarantee of things to come. The presence of the Holy Spirit is that of God Himself to help and guide us, as a person not some force to be manipulated. The Spirit's presence makes it possible for us to be holy and blameless. He is the deposit, the foretaste, of the eternal, spiritual inheritance we are to experience when Jesus returns.

Paul's point is this: It is God who has done all this for us, it is God who is to receive all glory and praise.

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