

Your Position in Christ

Ephesians 1:3 Blessed be the God even Father of the Lord of us Jesus Christ...

This proclaimed the relationship of God with Jesus Christ.

We now come to God's relationship with all believers throughout the Church Age. Ephesians 1:3b-6.

Ephesians 1:3 ...Having blessed us or provided us...

So here we learn more about God. He has a Divine plan. He provides everything necessary to fulfill His plan. This is grace. This is thoughtfulness. This is love of God. He has provided everything you will need to fulfill God's plan for you in this life.

Ephesians 1:3 ...Having blessed us or provided us with every spiritual blessing or spiritual benefit...

What in the world does this mean?

First, these are called *spiritual blessings* to make a distinction between the historical period of the Jews and the beginning of the Church Age. In the period of the Jews most of the blessings were material, like land blessings.

The second reason is to draw attention to their immediate source being from the Holy Spirit. These spiritual blessings are given by God the

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Father, but they are administered to us by God the Holy Spirit, therefore *spiritual blessings*. It is the same reason we study *spiritual love*. We call this spiritual love, for it can come only through a New Spiritual creation: born-again believer and only by the power of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, it is vital that you know how to be empowered by the Holy Spirit. And this of course is by grace through faith in the Holy Spirit. The Greek word *pneumatikos* occurs some 26 times in the New Testament and almost every time it refers to some function of the Holy Spirit.

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I hope that by now you are starting to think a lot more of and about God the Father than maybe you have before we came to verse 3.

In the heavenly *places* in Christ. What does this mean?

First, you will note that *places* is in italics, which you know means this is not in the original manuscripts. This expression is used some five times in the book of Ephesians. It is a beautiful Biblical and Theological term. Grammatically, this is preceded by the *definite article*, and it is a *noun* used as a *descriptive adjective* in the plural, of the *noun* made up of the prefix *epi* meaning upon or in; plus the Greek word for heaven, therefore *heavenlies* or *heavenly places*. It refers to what pertains to or is in heaven. Another word would be *celestial*. We must be a little careful and not make this refer solely to the residence of God, for this word is used in

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Ephesians 6:12 our struggle is against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly *places*.

In John 3:12, Jesus contrasts heavenly things with earthly things. The best way to start to grasp this phrase which occurs five times in Ephesians, is to relate it to our position in Jesus Christ. Jesus, as God, came to earth in the form of man, then died spiritually and physically on the cross, was buried, was raised, and ascended to heaven and is now seated at the right hand of God the Father. At salvation, we are placed in union with Christ, where He is seated, and therefore we are seated with Him, in heaven.

Ephesians 2:6 and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus,

Each of the five occurrences of this phrase describes the effect of our being in Christ in the heavens at the right hand of God the Father.

1. We are the recipients of spiritual blessings. 1:3.
2. We are the recipients of spiritual power. 1:19-20.
3. We are the recipients of eternal blessings. 2:6-7.
4. We are the recipients of God's display of His Divine Wisdom. 3:10.
5. We are the recipients of being in the spiritual battle. 6:12.

We will examine the blessing of being the recipients of these blessings as we come to them in our study.

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Ephesians 1:3 Blessed be the God even Father of the Lord of us Jesus Christ. Having blessed us or provided us with every spiritual blessing or spiritual benefit in the heavenly *places*

And now we come to the most wonderful blessing of all.

in Christ. What does this mean? There is no definite article here. The absence of the definite article emphasizes the quality. The quality here is perfect, Christ. His humanity is in the place of highest honor and glorification. His deity always possesses glorification. As the God-man seated at the right hand of the Father in hypostatic union, He is in the highest position of honor.

Hebrews 1:13 But to which of the angels has He ever said, Sit at my Right Hand.

None! And remember we are seated there with Him; we, you, are seated above angels. This is what the book of Ephesians is all about...*in Christ*. Sometimes it is what we have received *in Christ*; sometimes it is what we are *in Christ*; sometimes it is what God has done *in Christ*.

Our position in Christ is soundly called by R.B. Thieme Jr., Positional Truth.

Positioned in Christ

1. Positioned in Christ is unique to the Church Age believer. In no other dispensation is there such a place as being *in Christ*. The moment one believes in Jesus Christ as Savior, he does not become a member of the race or nation of Israel. God the Holy

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Spirit enters him into union with Christ forever. You cannot lose your position in Jesus Christ. You did nothing to put yourself into Christ. You can do nothing to take yourself out of union with Christ. It is eternally yours...due to the Faithfulness of God.

2. Means of Positioned in Christ: Non-meritorious faith in Jesus Christ as your Savior.
3. Mechanics of Position in Christ is by the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. Acts 1:5; John 17:21-22; 14:20 and chapter 15; 1 Corinthians 12:13.
4. Characteristics of Position in Christ:
 - a. Not an experience, or emotional, nor ecstasies.
 - b. Not progressive. It cannot be improved.
 - c. Not related to human merit or works or any performance, it is by grace.
 - d. Eternal in nature; neither God nor angels nor man can change it.
 - e. Obtained in total at the point of belief in Jesus as Savior.
5. Our Position in Christ explains election and predestination, two doctrines that many believers are so confused about. We will study them in Ephesians chapter 1. Both are defined and understood by the believer's position in Christ. Believers are elected and predestined *in Christ*. No one is elected or predestined outside of Jesus Christ. Every believer shares the election of Jesus Christ. When you are put in Christ, then you

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share the election of Christ and share the predestination of Jesus Christ.

6. Positioned in Christ also clarifies sanctification. Ephesians 1:3-6.
7. (One that legalists resent) Every believer—carnal, sinful, or spiritual is positioned in Christ. 1 Corinthians 1:2 and 30. Here, in Christ is true equality of all believers.
8. Our being imputed with perfect Righteousness is from our Position in Christ. 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Corinthians 1:30.
9. Our being in Christ protects every believer from Divine Judgment in eternity: Romans 8:1. No, your sins will not find you out! You are in Christ. Everyone who believes in Jesus Christ as Savior is imputed with perfect Righteousness which means no believer will be at the Last Judgment.
10. Being in Christ qualifies every believer to live with God forever. 1 John 5:11-12. Therefore, this guarantees Eternal-Security. Romans 8:38-39.
11. Because you are in Christ, every believer shares many things with Christ.
 - a. We share the life of Christ: eternal life. 1 John 5:11-12.
 - b. We share the perfect righteousness of Christ. 2 Corinthians 5:21.
 - c. We share the election of Christ. Ephesians 1:4.
 - d. We share the destiny of Jesus Christ. Ephesians 1:5.

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- e. We share the heritage of Christ. 1 Peter 1:4-5.
 - f. We share the sanctification of Christ 1 Corinthians 1:2; John 17:17-19 and Hebrews 10:14.
 - g. We share the Priesthood of Jesus Christ—I am so sorry that this is not all that important to believers—that we share the Priesthood of Christ. If you were of Jewish background, this would be a major issue with you, that you are a priest after the order of Jesus Christ which is above the priesthood order of the Levites.

There is just so much involved in your sharing the Priesthood of Jesus Christ. 1 Peter 2:4-9.
 - h. Christ is the Son of God and being in Christ means we share His Sonship.
 - i. Christ is King and therefore we share His kingdom. 2 Peter 1:11.
12. Many aspects of our lives today here on earth are from our position in Christ.
- a. Our Christian liberty is founded on our being in Christ. Galatians chapter 2.
 - b. Blessings in time are not dependent on our performance but are dependent upon our position in Christ. Ephesians. 1:3.
13. We are identified with Jesus Christ in His death. Colossians 2:12.
14. We are identified with Christ in His Resurrection. Colossians 2:12.

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Being identified with Jesus Christ in His death means that in our daily lives we do not have to be under the power and control of our Inherited Sin Nature ...dead to us. Every time we sin, we resurrect this dead sin nature.

Being identified with Jesus Christ in His Resurrection defines our Spiritual life, Spiritual freedom, and Spiritual liberty!

15. Positional Truth is not known experientially, it is known only through the Word of God.
16. And never forget, all these blessings were prepared by God in Eternity Past and were obtained in total at the moment of salvation.

Summarizing:

At the point of faith in Jesus Christ as Savior, God the Father gave you 34 blessings. One of them is that God the Holy Spirit baptizes or places you *in Christ*.

This means you are a new creation in Christ. 2 Corinthians 5:17. This establishes Eternal Fellowship with Jesus Christ and God the Father.

Your eternal position in Christ establishes eternal fellowship, which is the pattern of your Temporal fellowship with the Godhead and with One Another.

Every born-again believer has the same equal spiritual privileges as any other believer. Christ in you and you in Christ. John 14:20.

Add to this that the Holy Spirit indwells every one of you! Every one of you are your own priest. This means you represent yourselves before

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God the Father—in prayer, worship. And every believer in Christ has the same purpose: to glorify God the Father and His Son Jesus the Christ in the Holy Spirit. To be a witness of Jesus Christ during your time here on earth, to be an Ambassador for Christ.

Think about each one of these and daily give thanks to God for them.

**Ephesians 1:4 just as He chose us in Him
before the foundation of the world, that we
would be holy and blameless before Him. In
love**

Just as flows in parallel with verse 3 ...

who has blessed us ...just as He chose us in Him. The compound adverb can be used in a number of ways, here *causal* (the Complete Wordstudy Dictionary of the New Testament). Why is identifying this as *causal* important? God is the cause of election! God is the cause of His own plan. God is perfect, therefore, His plan is perfect. If you were born a male...that is perfect for you; if you were born a female, that is perfect for you. No parent or individual has the right to say God's plan is not perfect for me. But here in this context we are concerned with election.

Just as He has chosen us in Him. We saw the all-important doctrine of our position in Christ. Today we are looking at the often confusing doctrine of election. This is the *aorist middle indicative* of the Greek word *eklego*. The *aorist tense* here is important to our daily security that relieves stress. So many Christians today do not have a solid understanding of the Plan of God, and therefore 'worry' 'get stressed out in their souls' when they think about their lives and what happens after

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they die. Dear people, if we correctly understand the Word of God, there would be no Stress-Anxiety-Depression (SAD) in our lives but there would be peace which leads to courage to live the Spirit-Filled Life. But to correctly understand the Word of God and the Plan of God calls for some in-depth study of God's Word, which few pastors are willing to do, and few people want to spend the time to think, and learn about the Plan of God. It begins with something like the *aorist tense* of the verb—*He hath chosen us*. This is what is classified as a *gnomic aorist*. The *gnomic aorist* is designed to reveal something that is completely absolute. Here we have an absolute statement about the plan of God: *He has chosen us*. This is an absolute about you if you are a believer in Jesus Christ as your Savior. This can never be changed. I am so sorry for Christians who think they can lose their salvation. This is at the very core of God the Father's plan. He has chosen us under the policy of *grace*. And this means that our being *chosen* does not depend on us and depends completely on perfect God with His perfect faithfulness.

And the *middle voice* adds to this comfort, this security, we have of our eternal salvation. In the *middle voice* the subject, God the Father, participates in the outcome, or here, He causes the outcome. While the *active voice* stresses the action, the *middle voice* stresses the agent. God the Father is the agent here. God the Father is the source of election. So you can grasp the significance of this being in the *middle voice*, it emphasizes the character of the agent. Here the Sovereignty, the overruling power of God. It emphasizes His perfection. If you know the essence of God, and you believe in the essence of God, then you know that this election is permanent and cannot be changed or lost.

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And the *indicative mood* is the reality of God the Father having selected or elected us for Himself.

He has elected us. This refers to every person throughout the Church Age who believes in His Son, Jesus the Christ.

He has elected us in Him. We saw how we are positioned in Him. Now we see that we are elected in Him.

before the foundation of the world

Being chosen or elected has caused a great deal of trouble and confusion throughout Church history.

And I am going to come right to the center of the battle. God in His grace allowed Martin Luther to bring back, Scripture only, Grace only, Faith only. So, Satan stepped right in to start confusion right from the beginning of the Reformation. He used an untrained man named John Calvin. Calvin introduced what is known today as Calvinism and is believed by multitudes since the Reformation and has caused so many to be in turmoil, away from the Grace of God.

In simple terms this conflict is centered on the Essence of God, namely His Sovereignty. Calvinist believe in the absolute Sovereignty of God, meaning that for man to have free will to choose for himself to believe in Jesus or not believe in Jesus would challenge, even impair, the Sovereignty of God. This is a *weak* view of the Sovereignty of God. This view sees or understands God's sovereignty as being so weak or so small that to give man free will would cause God not to be Sovereign. Nothing can be further from the truth. In fact, to give man (and angels) free will

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heightens His Sovereignty, that no matter what decision an individual makes, God's sovereignty uses that to fulfill His plan.

Then there are those who are known as Arminians. These have such a weak view of God that while God did give free will, even He does not know who will believe and who will not believe. This of course leaves out the Omniscience of God, the all-knowing of God. God knew in eternity past everyone who would believe and everyone who would refuse to believe.

There are those who argue that God should have created everyone to believe in Him. Make no doubt about this, God could have done it that way. But then the issue would be simply His Omniscience. That God was a great engineer who could put into everyone's soul a 'chip' that would cause them to believe in His Son. Then there would be no glory in 'love.' What good is love if it is programmed, not chosen? No one really wants someone to love them because they have taken a 'love potion.' We desire for someone to love us of their own free will.

God's Sovereignty is so intact and unchallenged that He even gives freedom of choice to those who do believe in Jesus as their Savior. For example

Galatians 5:13 For you were called to freedom, brethren; only *do not turn* your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.

It is clear from this passage that a believer has the freedom to choose to use that freedom to advance his own flesh nature or to choose to trust the

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Holy Spirit and serve one another in love. If this does not challenge the Sovereignty of God, then it shows that to give the unbelievers freedom to choose to trust Jesus Christ or not also does not challenge the Sovereignty of God.

How beautiful are the words of Joshua

Joshua 24:15 “If it is disagreeable in your sight to serve the Lord, choose for yourselves today whom you will serve: whether the gods which your fathers served which were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”

The Hebrew word translated *disagreeable* is a word of volitional choice, a decision that something is right or wrong. What kind of God would He be to program people to make wrong decisions? Then chastise them for their decision? So, there are those who have a view of God, that He decided who would believe in His Son and who would not believe in His Son. Their view of God is that God actually created and then predestined members of His creation to spend an eternity in a lake of fire, separated from Him. People, not only is this not the God of the Bible, it is a pitiful view of God.

So, what does it mean when it says...He chose us or elected us in Him?

We will take that up next week.