

## **SAINTS OR SINNERS? (Ephesians 1:1-3)**

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*Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, to the saints in Ephesus, the believers in Christ Jesus: Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms in Christ (Eph 1:1-3).*

### **1. Called to be saints**

- The Christians at Ephesus are here called saints
- What is a saint? 'Saint' = 'holy one'
- Used of both angels and humans in Scripture (Ephesians 1:1; Jude 14)
- Every believer is a saint (Rom 1:7; 1 Cor 1:2; 2 Cor 2:1; Phil 1:1,21)
- We are made holy (saints) by being 'in Christ Jesus'

### **2. Believers in Christ Jesus**

- Believe = trust in or rely on
- See Acts 16:31; Romans 10:9,10; Eph 2:8,9
- A believer trusts in the Lord Jesus Christ for everything pertaining to salvation

### **3. Grace and Peace**

- Grace = undeserved favour. God is good to us because he loves us
- Peace = absence of hostility. We are now at peace with God (Romans 5:1)
- The Lord Jesus Christ is here presented as equal with the Father

### **4. Blessed be God**

- Bless = *eulogeo* = speak (*logeo*) well (*eu*) of—as in 'eulogy'
- Praise means speaking well of God
- This is a practice we should cultivate (Psalm 34:1,2; Luke 19:40; Heb 13:15)
- Notice which God it is we bless—the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ

### **5. Who has blessed us**

- God has blessed us (spoken well of us)
- He has said many good things about us (chapters 1-3)
- Aorist tense = completed blessing. The work is done!
- Spiritual blessing—we may be materially poor but spiritually rich
- Every spiritual blessing is ours—so how many blessings do we lack?
- In the heavenly realms = the realm where God dwells; the realm of the supernatural (ie of power)
- If every spiritual, supernatural blessing is ours, how many more are there yet to come?

### **6. Hindrances to Blessing**

If God has already blessed us with every spiritual blessings in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, why don't more believers enjoy God's blessings?

- We may be ignorant
- We may be doubtful
- We may be fearful
- We may be disobedient
- We may be unwilling
- We may be indifferent
- We may be deceived

## 7. Blessings in Christ

- Being a Christian is accepting the blessings that are ours in Christ and living them out
- All this is in Christ. There is nothing outside of him
- The Christian life is realising
  - what we have
  - who we arein Christ
- It is not becoming what I am not; it is becoming what I already am!
- (Compare a baby: she is a human being and spends the rest of her life becoming who she really is—a human being!)
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Here is a summary of some of the blessings listed in Ephesians chapters 1-3:

### KNOWING WHO I AM

*I am a saint (1:1)*

*Grace and peace are mine (1:2)*

*I am blessed with every blessing (1:3)*

*I am chosen before the creation of the world*

*I am predestined (1:5)*

*I am adopted into God's family (1:5)*

*I am redeemed (1:7)*

*I am forgiven (1:7)*

*God's grace is lavished on me (1:8)*

*Wisdom and understanding are mine (1:8)*

*God's will is made known to me (1:9)*

*I am included in Christ (1:13)*

*I am sealed with the Holy Spirit (1:13)*

*I have a guaranteed inheritance (1:14)*

*I am called to hope (1:18)*

*I have a glorious inheritance (1:18)*

*His incomparably great power works in me (1:19)*

*God has given me life (2:5)*

*I am seated in heavenly places (2:6)*

*I am saved by grace (2:8)*

*I am God's workmanship (2:10)*

*I am brought near through Christ's blood (2:13)*

*I am reconciled with others (2:16)*

*I have access to the Father (2:18)*

*I am a fellow citizen with God's people (2:19)*

*I am a dwelling place for God's Spirit (2:22)*

*I am a member of one body (3:6)*

*I share in the promise of Christ (3:6)*

*I can approach God with freedom (3:13)*

*God is able to do immeasurably more than I can ask or imagine (3:20)*

- How do we see ourselves? From a human or a divine perspective?
- We need to develop a faith-image of ourselves—to see ourselves as God sees us! By faith
- When I know what I have, I can become who I am
- I AM BECOMING WHAT I AM!

### SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

**Read:** Ephesians 1:1-3

1. Paul describes himself here as an apostle. Who is the greatest apostle in the NT? (Clue: The answer is in Hebrews.) Why is he called an apostle?
2. Why did Jesus call his apostles? What did he expect of them? (See Matt 10:1; Mark 12:13-15). What do we learn from this about the nature of our ministry today?
3. The word 'saint' means 'holy one' or 'sanctified one.' How do we become holy (sanctified)? See 1 Cor 6:11.
4. Verse three refers to all the blessings that are ours in Christ. How many times does the phrase 'in Christ' or its equivalent occur from 1:1 to 2:10? What is the importance of this?
5. Consider the list of blessings given above. Arrange them in order of priority with the ones that mean the most to you at the beginning. Compare your list with others. Explain why you put your first three blessings first.
6. Memorise Ephesians 1:3.