

SUNDAY SCHOOL MATERIALS FOR ADULTS

LESSON 10



BLESSINGS OF THE KINGDOM

Scripture Text: Ephesians 1:1-14

For a subject so big, the problem is to settle on a portion of Scripture for study. Much of the Bible (especially the New Testament) tells of the kingdom blessings. The portion chosen touches several, but not nearly all. Meditate upon them. Pray over them. Let your heart go out to Him in praise for the wonders of His grace.

The boundless resources of God are behind His provisions for His people. His storehouses are full and running over. His blessings are complete, nothing lacking to those in His kingdom. All He asks of them is due thanks and praise.

MEMORY VERSE: *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.* —**Ephesians 1:3**

Grace and Peace

Ephesians 1:1-3 Paul wrote **to the saints** at Ephesus. One who has entered the kingdom of God is a **saint**. He is brought into joint-heirship with Jesus Christ (**Romans 8:17**). **Grace** is his. That is, God makes His favor to rest upon His child. From His favor, He pours out special portions for special needs. As one goes to Him in trust, He gives of His strength, His faith, His love, and so on. It is a free gift to His children.

And peace . . . — peace OF God, peace FROM god, peace WITH God (**Romans 5:1; Philippians 4:7**) . . . **Hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ**—gifts and privileges without measure from an inexhaustible storehouse above. The child of God is tasting of heavenly things, is a citizen of the Jerusalem which is above, and is sampling the powers of the world to come. These are to be had in Christ, only by those living in Christ's kingdom.

Holiness

Ephesians 1:4-6 **Chosen us in him**—planned **before the foundation of the world** that we should be in Christ. It was His original plan for us before creation. Chosen to **be holy and without blame**—clean, pure, free from sin—in love—the love of God working in all, makes hearts, lives, and actions holy.

This original plan of God was to make us His children **by Jesus Christ**, through the salvation His death provides. We cannot comprehend or explain it except that it is by **the glory of his grace**. His grace makes us **accepted in the beloved**, in God's beloved Son. All have this privilege but few accept it.

Redemption

Ephesians 1:7-9 **In whom**—in Christ—**we have redemption**, are redeemed or bought back from the captivity and slavery of the devil. He has held people in the bondage of sin. His kingdom is sin throughout. Freedom from it is **the forgiveness of sins**, washing from the heart the filth of sin, erasing of guilt, breaking of Satan's hold. How? **Through His blood**. Christ bought redemption for us in giving His blood in payment for our sins. This was the only way possible that our redemption could be purchased. The blood of animals could not do it. It is done **according to the riches of his grace**. The **mystery of his will** which He has **made known** to us is the Gospel, the good news of complete salvation.

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Heavenly Inheritance

Ephesians 1:10-12 The will of God which He **purposed in himself** is that **in the dispensation of the fullness of times**, or in His final dispensation, the Holy Spirit dispensation, He **will gather together in one all things in Christ**. The words, **in Christ**, show the nature of things gathered. Who will be gathered? **Both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him**—the saved of both Jews and Gentiles (all nations) and angels and celestial beings who are subject to Him (**1 Peter 3:22**). This gathering is already being accomplished—all the saved of earth are in the same kingdom. These ones are able to know things that are beyond knowledge. What a blessing (**Ephesians 3:18-19**)! These ones are raised to a higher plane of living, here in this world, made to **sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus**—a Heaven on earth experience (**Ephesians 2:6; Ephesians 3:10**).

In whom—in Christ—we **have obtained an inheritance**—we are among those being gathered. **Being predestinated**—it was settled long ago in the purpose of God that those who **trusted in Christ** should be in His gathering. This blessing is included in the everlasting covenant spoken to Abraham (**Genesis 17:7-8; Galatians 3:7-9**).

Holy Spirit Sealing

Ephesians 1:13-14 Now Paul changes from writing in the first person, **we**, to the second person, **ye**. Perhaps Paul had been thinking of the Jews as **we**, and of the Ephesians as Gentiles, **ye**, to whom the Gospel later came. The Ephesians also **were sealed with that Holy Spirit** Jesus promised to send. He was living in their hearts to direct their lives, keep from sin, give understanding, and be powerful in witnessing. He **sealed** them—marked them as belonging to God. As a brand marks cattle, so the Holy Spirit in one marks him as a peculiar possession of God.

The Spirit is the **earnest of our inheritance**—the foretaste, a sample or promise of more to come. The earnest holds until . . . **the purchased possession** is redeemed. The whole person—body, soul, and spirit—of a saved one is purchased by Christ. The soul is redeemed from sin here in this life. When Christ comes back at His second coming the body will be redeemed from corruption (**1 Corinthians 15:51-54**). The presence of the Holy Spirit in one is the **earnest** of this promise.

Notice the order in verse 13. First they **heard**, and then **trusted**, and then **after they believed**, they **were sealed** WITH the Holy Spirit, not BY the Holy Spirit.

Material Provision

Our lesson has dealt with some spiritual blessings of the kingdom. These things affect every detail of daily life. There are material blessings also. What did God promise to all who leave house, family, or lands for His sake and the Gospel's (**Mark 10:29-30**)? What are the **all these things** Jesus said **shall be added unto you who seek . . . first the kingdom of God** (**Matthew 6:33**)?

Count the times the word *according* occurs in the Scripture verses. What is revealed here? In each instance a blessing from God is measured against, or is in proportion to, a purpose or quality of God. For instance, **all spiritual blessings** accord with His choice of us to be holy. This means that all Heaven's storehouse is full and available to every one of Christ's subjects.

JUST A THOUGHT

It is better to be with Christ in the storm than in smooth waters without Him.

This lesson is adapted from a lesson by Mary Lehmann.
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