

## EPHESIANS 01:03 GOD'S BLESSINGS

*Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. Ephesians 01:03*

God's blessings are spiritual and heavenly, not material blessings. Throughout history God has used two methods of blessings to deal with man. Before Christ, God dealt with man by blessing him with material blessings. He promised Abraham and Israel land, wealth, and fame. (See *Israel, God's Special People*, Jn. 4:22; *Jews, the Seed of Abraham*, Rom. 4:1-25. See Gen. 12:1f; 13:14-17; 15:1-7, 15-19; 22:16-18; 26:2-5, 24; 28:13-15; 31:13; 35:9-12.) But Israel misused and hoarded the material blessings. Instead of sharing its blessings with other nations, Israel isolated itself and claimed superiority and God-given rights over other nations of the earth. However, since Christ, God deals with man spiritually, blessing him with spiritual blessings.

Five things should be noted about this.

1. Spiritual blessings *are of the Spirit*. It is the Spirit that controls man and the circumstances that surround him. A man may feel bad; he may be down, depressed and oppressed; but if his spirit is strong, he arises and conquers his feelings. He controls and overcomes the oppressing circumstances, and he lives a victorious day. But if his spirit is weak, whether at work or at play, he often wallows around in self-pity, grumbling and griping and living a defeated day. And too often the days stretch into weeks and months until a person's life is down more than it is up — all because the spirit is too weak to conquer. Thus, the major blessings of God are bound to be blessings that are spiritual — that enable a person to control his life.
2. Spiritual blessings are the very opposite of temporal blessings. They are the *blessings of the inner man*, the blessings of the immortal. But of all blessings, they are the most glorious and satisfying. They are the blessings that erase the loneliness, alienation, and purposelessness of man. They are the blessings that give man an over-abundance of life.
3. Spiritual blessings are vastly superior to material blessings. They are *permanent and perfect and eternal*, lasting forever. They are of the very same nature as God Himself. Spiritual blessings exist and can be experienced both upon earth (the physical dimension of being) and in heaven (the spiritual dimension of being).
4. Spiritual blessings are found only *in Christ*. Jesus Christ has been raised from the dead and exalted to the right hand of God the Father. He is in heaven, surrounded by all the heavenly atmosphere and blessings. All heavenly blessings are His;

He is Lord and Possessor of all blessings. Therefore, if a person is to experience the spiritual blessings, he must be *in Christ*. If a person is *in Christ*, then he sits *in heaven* with Christ. How is this possible? When a person *believes in Christ*, truly believes, God takes his faith and counts it as righteousness. God counts the person to be the same as Christ, righteous and acceptable. In God's mind *faith in Christ* makes a person just like Christ: holy and righteous and acceptable for heaven. Therefore, when a person believes in Christ, God's mind sees the person in Christ; God sees the person identified with Christ, seated in heaven. And being seated in heaven, the person can experience all the blessings of heaven. Simply stated, to be *in Christ* means to believe in God's Son so much so that God becomes elated — elated so much that He counts the person to be just like Christ: acceptable and worthy to be blessed with all the blessings of heaven.

5. God dealt with man in material blessings first because man had to learn several things.
  - a. An earthly inheritance does not last. It is subject to being lost or stolen. We either watch our material possessions deteriorate or else we leave our material possessions behind for others.
  - b. An earthly nation and material inheritance cannot bring peace and security. Peace and security are of the spirit. Earthly nations and material things are of the earth, of a corruptible nature. Thus nations and material things do not solve the spiritual struggle that man senses within his own being. Neither can nations and material things erase the spiritual divisions between men and between man and God.
  - c. Man has within his *inner being* a basic selfishness and greed. Man finds a tendency, an unregulated urge, that desires and seeks the material and hoards the corruptible to the neglect of the spiritual.
  - d. Man must undergo a basic change of character to be freed of this urge, this tendency that causes so much bondage, disruption, and division within one's self and between men. Man must be born again, made into a new creation, created into a *new man* — spiritually, permanently, perfectly, eternally. And such a spiritual creation must be performed by Someone much greater than himself. Man must be recreated by the hand of God Himself. □