

## A BIBLICAL STUDY ON PRAISE

### LESSON EIGHTEEN: PRAISE AND SALVATION

by Sandy Harber

**"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**

We have many reasons to praise our amazing God, Who has bestowed upon every believer all spiritual blessings, which are retained in heaven and are progressively dispensed on earth as needed. All of these blessings are in Christ, that is, we receive these benefits when we accept Jesus as our Savior and become part of the Body of which He is the Head (i.e. the Church). It is, therefore, right and just that we praise God for His plan of salvation. Paul summed up God's plan in one extended sentence (in the original Greek) that spanned 12 verses (Eph. 1:3-14). These 12 verses are actually a three stanza doxology that documents the role that each member of the Trinity played in effecting our salvation. A doxology signifies the honor resulting from a good opinion. With reference to God these are "glory words." In the Ephesians 1 passage you will find these glory words at the end of each stanza.

Stanza one, verses 3 to 6, praises God the Father, Who chose (v. 4), predestinated (v. 5), adopted (v. 5), and accepted (v. 6) us before the foundation of the world. In eternity past, God the Father chose the people who would be saved (this does not negate man's free will). His purpose in selecting us was to make us holy (v. 4). Those He selected He predestinated, which means that He "determined before" that we would be brought into His family. He accomplished this by adopting us, which entails legally transferring a child from the authority of the natural parent to the authority of the adoptive parent. The adopted child becomes a legal heir of the parent. Thus, believers became co-heirs with Jesus Christ (Gal. 4:4-7). God did all of this for us because it pleased Him to do so, not because of any good that He saw in us. We owe our salvation to the mercy and kindness of God. By His grace (unmerited favor) we are accepted into "the beloved," that is, "the One He loved" (i.e. Jesus). Believers are "in" the Son, meaning they are regarded as part of Him so that as the Father loves the Son so He loves His adopted children. To be "accepted" in verse 6 means "to indue with special honor" or "to be highly favored." In eternity past, God the Father chose us to be a part of His family by faith in Jesus Christ to "the praise of the glory of His grace" (v.6).

Stanza two, verses 7 to 12, describe how God the Son carried out in real time the plan His Father determined before the foundation of the world (v. 3). Jesus redeemed us with His precious blood, effecting the forgiveness of sins (v. 7), and providing us with insight into God's will (vv. 8-9), which is to restore all things, under the headship of Christ, to their original state of peace and fellowship between God and man. This will occur when Jesus reigns as King of Kings in the Millennium (v. 10; Rev. 20:4), and we who are "in Christ" will obtain our promised inheritance (v.11). Paul reminds the Gentile believers that it was Jews who first trusted Jesus as Savior. Jewish believers are united with Gentile believers to make up the Church "to the praise of His glory" (v.12).

Stanza three, verses 13-14, describe the role of the Holy Spirit in our salvation. Paul continues from verse 12, where he explained that it was the Jew who first trusted in Christ, that "ye" (the Gentiles) also trusted after hearing the "word of truth" (i.e. gospel). At the moment a sinner believes, his sins are forgiven, he is adopted into the family of God, he is accepted in the Beloved, and he is sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise (v.13). A seal is affixed to a document when the transaction is completed. Salvation is a done deal the second we believe. A seal is a certificate of genuineness, authority, and approval: it is proof of ownership; and it is a symbol of security. You belong to God and you can never lose your salvation (Jn.10:27-29; Eph. 4:30). The Holy Spirit is the "earnest" of your inheritance (v. 14), that is, the down payment, the guarantee that ensures that the promises made will be fulfilled. God the Father gave the Holy Spirit to indwell each believer at the moment of his/her spiritual birth. God will not default on His promises and forfeit His Spirit. Believers are redeemed, bought back from the slave market of sin, purchased with the precious blood of Jesus, and the transaction is sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise "unto the praise of his glory" (v.14).

The work of the Trinity in effecting our salvation merits unending praise. Fortunately, we will have all of eternity to express our gratitude and praise His holy name.

*"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light." (1 Peter 2:9)*