

Eph 1:3 Blessed Be God--3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ

Paul starts out the content of this letter to the Ephesians with praise for all that God has done for us as believers. Paul is praising God for His for His supernatural plan and the wonderful things that He has accomplished for us, that are really beyond description. This section of the letter is Paul's praise for God's goodness to him, and it also serves as a model to encourage the Ephesian believers, and us to remember often, and with the priority of place, to offer praise to God, acknowledging His many blessings.

Blessed is

Paul begins by letting us know that God is blessed or praised. The Greek word εὐλογητός (eulogetos) has the idea of someone deserving appreciation, honor, and praise, and in the septuagint OT it is used 42 times to translate the Hebrew word בָּרַךְ (beh-hochk) is used once to bless a thing, namely, wisdom, a few times to bless people, but the predominant use is to bless Throughout the OT God is blessed or praised for his benefits to humanity as seen in his care, his response to prayer, and his deliverance from enemies and evil. Sometimes God is blessed for who he is (Pss 72:19; 89:52; 106:48; 135:21) although usually it is tied with something he has done for the saints. Paul is making a statement. He's not so much expressing a wish, "blessed be God," but rather a declaration, "blessed is God!" And this is why it's praise and worship.

In the NT εὐλογητός (eulogetos) is used eight times and it is never used of humans, but only of God (Mark 14:61; Luke 1:68; Rom 1:25; 9:5; 2 Cor 1:3; 11:31; Eph 1:3; 1 Pet 1:3). In fact, it's so exclusively used of God, that at Jesus' trial before Caiaphas it was used to refer to God by the high priest when he asked Jesus, "**Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?**" (Mark 14:61). It was the Jewish custom to avoid the use of the name God, as it is today, and so he substitutes "the blessed," indicating that God is one who is blessed or the one who deserves praise. It's interesting to me that the High Priest is literally paying lip-service to blessing God, at the very same time he is supervising the beating and torture of the incarnate God, Jesus. Once self-righteousness has taken a man over, and substituted itself for true-righteousness, the man does not know the difference, and such hypocrisy is possible, without batting an eye. Caiaphas rends his garments for Jesus' supposed blasphemy at declaring that He is the Christ, when he should have been rending his heart, and crying out in repentance. We need to be careful that we don't substitute self-righteousness for walking before God in truth and holiness, or we could find ourselves in the place of Caiaphas or Saul the Pharisee, committing awful acts, and claiming that they're in the name of God. He was forgetting that God is "The Holy One of Israel". And once we forget God is Holy, and lose our reverence and fear of Him, and then these kind of actions are possible. God is Holy, and Blessed, and we must remember it. 1 Peter 1:14-16 We must be holy, even as He is Holy. 1 Peter 1:14-16 **14 As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, 15 but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; 16 because it is written: "You shall be holy, for I am holy."**

God is blessed, has been blessed, is blessed, and will be blessed forever. Since it is timeless, God is (to be) blessed or praised forever. So Paul is saying God is blessed forever!

"the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" is frequently used in the New Testament, (cf. Rom 15:6; 2 Cor 1:3; 11:31; Col 1:3; 1 Pet 1:3), but rarely in the Old Testament (fifteen times out of 1448 references to God). But in the New Testament, it is the predominant way to refer to God (245 times out of 413 occurrences). So the emphasis of the New Testament is that He is both the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Paul makes this clear later in Eph 1:17 saying **7 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the [t]knowledge of Him.**

Next, Paul gives us reasons why we should praise God.

who has blessed us

The reason God is to be praised is because he blessed us. In the Old Testament, when God is the object of a person's blessing, it has the idea of "praise" and when a person is the object of God's blessings, it has the idea of "happiness, success, an increase of earthly possessions" Praying for someone meant that he petitions God to grant success to that person. Therefore, to be blessed by God means to receive benefits from God in the sense of possessions, prosperity, or power. For example, when Isaac blessed Jacob, Esau pleaded to have the blessings also (Gen 27).

So believers today are the object of God's blessing, provision and benefits. So, as His Children, we bless God who has blessed us, and as believers, we praise God because he has provided for us. How?

with every spiritual blessing.

God gives us every kind of spiritual blessing. In the OT the benefits were primarily material, such as prosperity and physical protection. The Greek word for spiritual here, pneumatikos refers to wind, air, and breath and is used 26 times in the NT. The spiritual is what we, in our flesh, are not. We need blessings that have their source in God. So God has blessed the believer with every spiritual benefit necessary for our spiritual well-being.

in the heavenly realms

The heavenly realms refer to the place where God rules. Spiritual benefits come from the Spirit as well as from the heavens. Spiritual blessings are from the heavenly places or realms and for the benefit of the believer here and now. We are equipped for spiritual warfare by God, and the struggles in the heavenlies are also played out on earth. So, as we reside on earth, we have been enriched with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies necessary for our spiritual well-being. We have all we need.

"in Christ."

The expression "in Christ", and its close parallels occur 36 times in the Book of Ephesians. It has the sense of the intimate fellowship of the Christian with the living spiritual Christ. He abides with us, and we with Him, and since the Holy Spirit is Spirit, He can commune with our spirit. In Christ occurs in Ephesians nearly twice as many times as in other of Paul's epistles, which indicates the source of our strength in spiritual warfare. We are a New Creation in Christ.

When we're born physically, we are identified with the human race whose head is Adam. When Adam sinned all people came under sin which brought death to all of us. Christ who knew no sin became a human being and took on him the sin of human beings and died to pay its penalty in behalf of humankind, thus propitiating God's wrath. Anyone who believes God's provision in Christ becomes united to a new head, Jesus. So we are "in Christ." We who are united with Christ who is in heaven, enjoys the spiritual gifts, blessings and benefits from God in Heaven.

God is praised because he has enriched believers with every spiritual benefit in the heavenlies in Christ. To declare God is blessed implies that praise is due. To declare the believer blessed implies that the spiritual benefits have been given. However, though spiritual benefits have been given, believers need to appropriate them.