

COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS

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PREFACE

In this booklet we propose to count only those blessings that are specifically in Christ, because then we are all on the same footing, whatever your outward condition may be. It is assumed that the reader is a believer in Jesus Christ, as He is revealed in the Old and New Testament Scriptures, which we believe are the word of God. If by any chance you are not a believer, then it is recommended that you ponder on the Scriptures quoted here, and see whether they speak to your heart.

Many of the spiritual blessings described have a physical counterpart in the Old Testament. We illustrate the parallelism in our coverage of examples of such Old Testament passages.

The FarAboveAll (FAA) translation and Authorized Version (AV) have been quoted throughout. Either is suitable for the study. The complete FarAboveAll translation, and this study, are available on www.FarAboveAll.com.

We have adopted a technique of interlacing our narrative with the Bible verses, or parts of verses, quoted, so that even within sentences there is often a repeated alternation of narrative and quotation. We have not accommodated FAA or AV punctuation in such constructions; occasionally the reader will need to do this mentally, especially in supplying a full stop after a quotation which does not end a sentence.

The FarAboveAll translation and the Authorized Version texts are aligned as follows:

Verse	FAA	AV
<i>text here</i>		<i>text here</i>

COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS

1. AGE-ABIDING LIFE (AV ETERNAL LIFE)

John 3:16 reads

John 3:16	For God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten son, so that everyone who believes in him should not be lost, but have age-abiding life.	For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.
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To the interested non-believer, who maybe would like to believe in the Son of God, we would suggest reading all of John's Gospel, and see whether you can believe the eight signs recorded there, because the signs were written

John 20:31	so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the son of God, and that <i>by</i> believing, you may have life through his name.	that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.
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For reference, here is where the eight signs can be found in John's Gospel: John 2:1-11, 4:46-54, 5:1-47, 6:1-14, 6:15-21, 9:1-41, 11:1-45, 21:1-14.

A problem everybody has, but which few recognize or take seriously early on in life, is that he or she is going to die. We all either meet with an untimely death, which is tragic, or we die of 'old age', which means that our bodies start functioning less and less efficiently until some critical part fails. Death. Isn't this a very, very, very serious problem? Isn't it heart-breaking when someone we love dies? Yet many people dismiss the problem as a natural necessity, or hope for a solution in the future from science, while still others expect a continuation of life in some occult form. But these are opinions, hopes and expectations that are based on human reasoning or guesswork. Moreover, these reasonings rarely if ever address the question of why it is we live in a universe where death reigns - we will see the Bible's answer to this question later (Nr. 3). When the author first became a Christian and read John's Gospel, it was as if a solution was presented to a problem that he only dimly realized he had. He had other problems on his mind. But he was given eternal life, hardly being aware it was a solution to an infinitely more serious problem than the ones with which he was preoccupied. And by considering the solution, eternal life, we realize that God knows our problems much better than we do, and what a very, very, very precious gift He has given us. Some-one has said, "When the chips are down, people will give everything they have to save their life." And here is God's gift, free of charge, worth far more than life on this earth, because unlike our present earthly life in an imperfect body, going through dangerous moments and boring moments, our eternal life will be in a glorious body (Phil 3:21), in an environment of perfect love and righteousness, as we shall see, and it will not come

to an end.

2. FORGIVENESS OF SINS (AV REMISSION OF SINS)

John's Gospel does not cover the subject of sin extensively, and where it mentions sin, it does not confront the reader with his or her sins directly, although it does refer to the sin of the world and various peoples' sins. It would appear to be possible to have eternal life through belief in Christ without having an understanding of the doctrine of sin and its forgiveness. The letter to the Romans covers the subject of sin thoroughly, but before we come to that (under the blessings "Justification" and "Peace with God"), let's just briefly look at some early preaching by the apostle Peter of forgiveness of sins. He says of Jesus Christ in Acts 10:43

Acts 10:43	All the prophets testify to him, that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.	To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.
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For the moment, if you realise that you are a sinner, be of good cheer because God has forgiven you, so there will be no accusations of any kind when in your eternal life you enter into His presence. Nothing new has to be done to obtain this forgiveness - it comes with the same faith that secured eternal life, faith in Jesus Christ.

3. JUSTIFICATION and 4. PEACE WITH GOD

We now move on to some "theory" of sin. We said the letter to the Romans covers the subject of sin thoroughly. Sin is linked to death. Where we have sin, we have death. Where we have no sin, or where sin has been removed, there is no death. Adam and Eve died because they sinned. God in His wisdom and righteousness did not allow Adam and Eve, (or their offspring) in their sinful state to live for ever (they would probably have found it more and more exasperating anyway) and cut them off from the tree of life (Gen 3:22-24). Romans 3:23 states

Rom 3:23	for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,	For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.
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The Old Testament has the same testimony, as Paul shows in Romans 3:10-18, quoting amongst other things part of Psalm 14. The first three verses of this Psalm read:

Ps 14:1-3	The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God." They have acted corruptly; They have acted abominably <i>in deed</i>. There is no-one who does good The LORD peered down from heaven	The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works; there is none that doeth good. The LORD looked down from heaven
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At the sons of Adam,
 To see if there was *anyone who* was
 prudent
 – *Anyone who* was seeking God.
 The whole has departed,
 They have become corrupt together;
There is no-one who does good
 – *There is not even one.*

upon the children of men, to see if
 there were any that did
 understand, and seek God.
 They are all gone aside, they are all
 together become filthy:
 there is none that doeth good, no, not
 one.

If anyone were to be absolutely perfectly righteous, meeting God's exceedingly high standard of absolute righteousness without any trace whatsoever of anything that defiles, that person would not need to be concerned when the Day of the Lord comes, because he would be accepted. God said to Cain,

Gen
 4:7 | **If you do well, *is there* not
 exaltation?**

**If thou doest well, shalt thou not be
 accepted?**

But if anyone has the slightest qualm, bearing in mind the following rather ominous questions:

Mal
 3:2 | **And
 Who *can* endure the day of his
 coming?
 And who *can* stand at his
 appearing?
 For he *is* like a refiner's fire,
 And like fullers' lye.**

**But who may abide the day of his
 coming? and who shall stand when
 he appeareth? for he *is* like a
 refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap:**

then listen to what else God said to Cain:

Gen
 4:7 | **And if you do not do well, a sin-
 offering is lying at the door,**

**and if thou doest not well, sin lieth
 at the door.**

The word translated “sin” in the AV also means “sin-offering”, and that would seem to make more sense. The sin-offering crouching at the door was a lamb, as Abel offered – a type of Christ, as is made clear by John the Baptist's exclamation:

John
 1:36 | **Behold the lamb of God.**

Behold the Lamb of God!

Maybe Romans convinces you, like the apostle Paul who wrote it, of your own sin. Paul knew the Mosaic law. He didn't question the justness of this law. He knew the tenth commandment (from Exodus 20:17):

Ex
 20:17 | **You shall not covet your
 neighbour's house; you shall not**

**Thou shalt not covet thy
 neighbour's house, thou shalt not**

covet your neighbour's wife, or his manservant, or his maidservant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything which *is* your neighbour's.

covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that *is* thy neighbour's.

Because of this law, Paul realized he coveted. Romans 7:7 says

Rom
7:7

But I would not have known sin, except through *the* law. For indeed I would not have known covetousness if the law had not said, "You shall not covet."

Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.

Have you ever coveted anything that is not yours?

Another Scripture that may well convict us of sin is the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew's gospel. Matthew 5:22 draws our attention to the seriousness of anyone who is

Matt
5:22

angry with his brother

angry with his brother

or who says

Matt
5:22

***You* fool**

Thou fool!

How often do you observe these sins taking place, and is anyone clear of guilt in this respect? The point is that just having hatred in our hearts is a terrible sin, making us unfit to come anywhere near God's presence, let alone giving hatred a free rein. But God in His mercy has provided us with a solution. Romans 4:3 quotes an Old Testament principle of righteousness being imputed by faith (i.e. faith in what God has said):

Rom
4:3

For what does the scripture say? "Now Abraham believed God, and it was imputed to him as righteousness."

For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.

This is of course referring to Genesis 15 where Abraham was promised a son and numerous posterity.

King David, too, was forgiven without works, as Romans 4:6-4:8 reminds us. Now Paul tells us that what applied to Abraham, applies to us. We too are justified by faith:

Rom
4:23-
25

But it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him, but also for our sakes, to whom it is

Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; But for us also, to whom it shall be

going to be imputed – to us *who* believe in him *who* raised Jesus our Lord from *the* dead, who was delivered on account of our transgressions and raised on account of our justification.

imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.

Romans 5 continues with a message of peace:

Rom
5:1

Having been justified therefore by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,

Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:

Again Christ is the source of more blessings! By the same faith that secured eternal life and forgiveness of sins, we see that we have also secured justification and peace with God. Two more blessings!

What is the difference between forgiveness of sins and justification? The two seem very close to each other. The difference would appear to be like being outside or inside a court-room. Forgiveness of sins has an informal, homely ring to it. In our case the forgiveness is achieved by formally taking away the sins. This makes us legally just. Justification seems to be a court term when, after close scrutiny of the case in hand, no fault can be found by a righteous judge and the defendant is pronounced just.

We see from Romans 4:25 (quoted above) that God doesn't just overlook sin - He requires full payment for it. In fact, (Romans 6:23)

Rom
6:23

the wages of sin *are* death

the wages of sin *is* death.

But Christ has paid the terrible price for us - paid for all our sins for good, and His words on the cross in John 19:30 were

John
19:30

“It has been completed”,

It is finished.

We should not doubt whether we are forgiven, whatever we may be guilty of. Our justification is not a matter of how sinful we are or what we try to do to make up. The forgiveness is based on Christ's work, which was 100% successfully completed.

5. THE HOLY SPIRIT and 6. RIGHTEOUSNESS

From the moment you believed in Christ, you were given the Holy Spirit. In Ephesians 1:13 we read:

Eph 1:13	in whom you too <i>put your hope</i> after you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, in whom also after you believed, you were sealed by the holy spirit of promise,	In whom ye also <i>trusted</i>, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,
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Now it is the Holy Spirit that changes us completely. In fact the Holy Spirit imparts us with righteousness. Someone has said, “God not only imputes righteousness, he imparts it as well.” This is the answer to those who object to God forgiving our sins and say it gives us a licence to sin. This objection was anticipated in Romans 6:1:

Rom 6:1	What then shall we say? Do we continue in sin so that grace may abound?	What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?
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No! Romans 6 goes on to explain that

Rom 6:2	<i>we ... have died to sin</i>	<i>we ... are dead to sin</i>
Rom 6:6	our old man was jointly crucified	our old man is crucified with <i>him</i>

and that we have

Rom 6:4	newness of life	newness of life
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and are

Rom 6:11	living to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.	alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.
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This new life is oriented to righteousness, not sin. Paul explains:

Rom 6:18	But having been set free from sin, you have become servants of righteousness.	Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.
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It is a real change in our character God has brought about. As we learn to live more and more in the new life, sinful things become an abomination to us, things we wouldn't touch with a barge-pole, let alone things to be coveted. We also see how useless the things are that we used to do, and are ashamed of them. Paul asks

Rom 6:21	So what fruit did you then have from the <i>things</i> of which you are now ashamed? For the result of those <i>things</i> is death.	What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death.
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The Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus is developed further in Romans 8. There, the Spirit is contrasted with the flesh and a carnal mind. Recapping on our other blessings, we are reminded that

Rom 8:6	but the mindset of the spirit <i>is on a par with</i> life and peace.	to be spiritually minded <i>is</i> life and peace.
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The idea of “new life” agrees with John 3:3 where the Lord says to Nicodemus,

John 3:3	“Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a person is begotten from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”	Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.
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The Lord goes on to explain the necessity of being born of the Spirit.

The apostle Peter also uses the expression “begotten / born again” in his first epistle:

1 Pet 1:18-23	knowing that you were not redeemed by perishable <i>things</i> , silver or gold, from your vain comportment <i>as</i> handed down from the fathers, but by precious blood as of a lamb without blemish and without spot – of Christ – <i>who was</i> appointed beforehand before <i>the</i> overthrow of <i>the</i> world, but in the latter times made manifest on your account, you <i>who</i> through him believe in God, who raised him from <i>the</i> dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope should be in God. Now that you have purified your inner selves by obedience to the truth through <i>the</i> spirit <i>leading</i> to unfeigned brotherly love, love each other intensely from a pure heart, having been begotten again, not from perishable seed, but from imperishable, through <i>the</i> living word of God, <i>which</i> also remains throughout the age.	Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, <i>as</i> silver and gold, from your vain conversation <i>received</i> by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God. Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, <i>see that ye</i> love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of
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**incorruptible, by the word of God,
which liveth and abideth for ever.**

God's Spirit and newness of life are not confined to the New Testament, although in the Old Testament, the Spirit was not necessarily given permanently, because Christ's sacrifice had not at that time taken place. Here are two examples, Saul and David.

Samuel announced that Saul would be given the Spirit of the Lord.

1 Sam 10:6	And the spirit of the LORD will come over you, and you will prophesy with them (i.e. the accompanying prophets), and you will be turned into another man.	And the Spirit of the LORD will come upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them (i.e. the accompanying prophets), and shalt be turned into another man.
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This duly took place:

1 Sam 10:9	And it came to pass that when he turned his back to depart from Samuel that God replaced his heart by a different <i>one</i>, and all these signs came about on that day.	And it was <i>so</i>, that when he had turned his back to go from Samuel, God gave him another heart: and all those signs came to pass that day.
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This by the way, explains the Hebrew of 1 Samuel 13:1.

1 Sam 13:1	Saul <i>was</i> one year old when he <i>started to</i> reign, and he reigned over Israel for two years.	Saul reigned one year; and when he had reigned two years over Israel,
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A comparison of the various versions is a sad testimony to many translators, who seem unwilling to accept Saul's spiritual age, and invent various numbers:

The New International Version (also essentially the New Living Translation, New American Standard Bible, Christian Standard Bible, Holman Christian Standard Bible, International Standard Bible, NET Bible, God's Word Translation) read, in essence,

Saul was thirty years old when he became king, and he reigned over Israel forty-two years.

The American Standard Version reads

Saul was forty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned thirty-two years over Israel.

The New English Bible reads

Saul was fifty years old when he became king, and he reigned over Israel twenty-two years.

Darby, the Revised Standard Version, Moffatt, and the Good News Bible (footnote) all use dots, suggesting a deficiency in the text, e.g. the RSV has

Saul was ... years old when he began to reign, and he reigned ... and two years over Israel.

The World English Bible reads

Saul was [forty] years old when he began to reign; and when he had reigned two years over Israel,

The Greek Septuagint omits the whole verse without leaving a trace.

The Latin Vulgate, however, has a faithful translation of the Hebrew:

Saul was a son of one year (=one year old) when he began to reign, and he reigned two years over Israel.

Let us compare this with Paul's statement when he addressed the congregation at the synagogue at Antioch, talking about Israel's history:

Acts
13:21

Then after that they asked for a king, and God gave them Saul *the* son of Kish, a man from *the* tribe of Benjamin, for forty years.

And afterward they desired a king: and God gave unto them Saul the son of Cis, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, by the space of forty years.

This is not a discrepancy, but the difference between counting Saul's natural years and his years of having the "Spirit of the Lord" and being "another man".

If you have read 1 Samuel, you might be disturbed by the fact that Saul later on sinned by disobeying God and became rejected as king over Israel. Does that mean that if we sin, we could become rejected by God? The answer is definitely no. In fact all Christians, as long as they are in this "body of sin", continue to sin to some extent, but sinning should not be our mode of life. John says,

1 John
1:8

If we say that we do not have sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

So if by sinning we were to be rejected by God, no-one at all would be accepted. The point John is making is that we have an advocate:

1 John
2:1-2

My little children, I write these *things* to you so that you do not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the father, Jesus Christ *the* righteous. And he is a

My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation

propitiation for our sins, and not only for ours, but also for *those of the whole world.*

for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for *the sins of the whole world.*

Note that the sins of the whole world have been atoned for, but only those who believe in the Son of God currently have access to the new life.

Saul was in his day under the law of Moses and could not then claim an atoning sacrifice for his sin as we can now.

In Psalm 51, David knew that a completely new heart was needed:

Ps
51:9-
11

**Hide your face from my sins,
And wipe out all my iniquities.
Create me a clean heart, *O* God,
And make a new right-minded spirit
in my inner self.
Do not cast me out of your presence,
And do not take your holy spirit
away from me.**

**Hide thy face from my sins, and blot
out all mine iniquities. Create in me
a clean heart, O God; and renew a
right spirit within me. Cast me not
away from thy presence; and take
not thy holy spirit from me.**

It would appear God answered David's prayer; David says,

Ps
40:1-3

**I fervently put hope in the LORD,
And he turned to me,
And heard my crying out.
And he brought me up out of a
deadly pit,
Out of the miry mud,
And he raised my feet onto a rock,
And he directed my steps.
And he put a new song in my mouth
– A psalm to our God.
Many will see and fear,
And trust in the LORD.**

**I waited patiently for the LORD; and
he inclined unto me, and heard my
cry. He brought me up also out of
an horrible pit, out of the miry clay,
and set my feet upon a rock, *and*
established my goings. And he hath
put a new song in my mouth, *even*
praise unto our God: many shall see
it, and fear, and shall trust in the
LORD.**

David found it appropriate to sing a “new song” corresponding to the new life which God gave him. It is interesting to note in passing how David's previous condition is called a “deadly pit” (AV “horrible pit”) and “miry mud” (AV “miry clay”). It is also noteworthy that David's praise to God acts as a witness to others who as a result put their trust in the Lord.

The theme of “new life” can be extended with a study of

- the **new man**

Eph 4:24, Col 3:10

- the **new creation** (AV **new creature**)

2 Cor 5:17, Gal 6:15

- the **inward man**

Rom 7:22, 2 Cor 4:16, Eph 3:16

and their opposites. A booklet by E. W. Bullinger called “The Two Natures in the Child of God” deals with this important subject admirably.

7 - 14. THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

As we count the blessings called in Galatians 5:22-23 the Fruit of the Spirit, we reap a rich harvest:

Gal 5:22- 23	But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faith, meekness, self-control. Against such <i>things</i> there is no law.	But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.
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This gives us the following additions to our list of blessings:

- (7) Love (AV sometimes *Charity*)
- (8) Joy
Peace (cf. nr 4)
- (9) Longsuffering
- (10) Kindness (AV Gentleness)
- (11) Goodness
- (12) Faith
- (13) Meekness
- (14) Self-control (AV Temperance)

Let us take a closer look at “love”. What are its characteristics? Paul tells us in 1 Cor 13.

1 Cor 13:4-8	Love is longsuffering; it is kind. Love is not jealous. Love does not vaunt itself; it does not become puffed up. It does not behave in an unseemly way; it does not seek its own <i>interests</i>; it is not provoked; it does not keep an account of evil. It does not rejoice over injustice, but rejoices with truth. It bears all <i>things</i>, it believes all <i>things</i>, it puts hope in all <i>things</i>; it endures all <i>things</i>. Love never fails. But if <i>there are gifts of prophecies</i>, they will be abolished. And if <i>there are tongues</i>, they will cease. And if <i>there is</i>	Charity suffereth long, <i>and</i> is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never faileth: but whether <i>there be prophecies</i>, they shall fail; whether <i>there be tongues</i>, they shall cease; whether <i>there be knowledge</i>, it shall vanish away.
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knowledge, it will cease *to be applicable*.

The flesh cannot achieve these qualities. The flesh can put up a display of good works or of patience, but sooner or later it will give up and may become resentful, bitter and recriminating. Love is characterized by a number of things it is or does, and also a number of things it is not or does not do.

Galatians contrasts the sinful nature to the fruit of the Spirit:

Gal 5:17- 21	For the flesh has desires against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; these are in opposition to each other, so that <i>it is</i> not what you want to do that you do. But if you are led by <i>the</i> spirit, you are not under <i>the</i> law. And the works of the flesh are evident; they are adultery, fornication, uncleanness, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strifes, rivalries, rage, contentions, dissensions, factions, envyings, murders, drunkenness, orgies and similar <i>things</i> to these, which I am telling you about beforehand as I have also told you before, <i>namely</i> that those <i>who</i> do such <i>things</i> will not inherit <i>the</i> kingdom of God.	For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are <i>these</i>; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told <i>you</i> in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.
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The fact that we have the Spirit, and that the Spirit is contrary to these evil things but bears good fruit, reinforces the answer to the question in Romans 6:1 about sinning all the more since we are forgiven. Being led by the Spirit, we do not sin all the more because we are forgiven.

Gal 5:24- 26	And those <i>who are</i> Christ's have crucified the flesh with <i>its</i> passions and <i>its</i> desires. If we live in <i>the</i> spirit, let us also march in line with <i>the</i> spirit. Let us not become vainglorious, challenging one another, envying one another.	And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.
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15 - 43. THE BLESSINGS IN EPHESIANS

In Ephesians we are informed that we are blessed

Eph
1:3

**with every spiritual blessing in the
upper-heavenly *places* in Christ,**

**with all spiritual blessings in
heavenly *places* in Christ:**

Ephesians mentions a large number of spiritual blessings. Some of these are, in their basic form, familiar to us from other parts of the Bible; others are specific to the dispensation (or administration) of God's grace which Paul reveals in Ephesians and Colossians - known as **the mystery** (Eph 3:3, Col 1:26).

In fact, the blessings in Ephesians are absolutely stupendous counterparts to Israel's earthly blessings, but on a far higher plane - an upper-heavenly plane at the highest possible level - at the right hand of God where Christ sits, and where we Gentiles (which includes Jewish believers in the current dispensation) are seated with Christ (Eph 2:6).

Paul is continually thankful for this - as we should be - but note that he writes that he is thankful that others (the Ephesian believers) have the blessings. See how he thinks of others rather than himself, although he himself has the same blessings, of course. He also wants the saints (i.e. the believers) to understand their blessings, and to know how great and powerful these blessings are. Here is what he says:

Eph
1:16-
21

[I] do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you on *the occasions of my prayers*, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in acknowledgment of him, *and give you eyes of your heart which have been enlightened*, so that you may know what the hope of his calling is, and what the wealth of the glory of his inheritance in holy *places* is, and what the exceeding greatness of his power is in us who believe, according to the action of his strong might, which he exerted in Christ, when he raised him from the dead and seated *him* at his right *hand* in the upper-heavenly *places*, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name *which is named*, not only in this age, but also in the *one* to come,

[I] cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, And what *is* the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set *him* at his own right hand in the heavenly *places*, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:

15. HOLINESS

Ephesians 1:3-4 says

Eph 1:3-4	Blessed <i>be</i> the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who <i>has</i> blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the upper-heavenly <i>places</i> in Christ, according to <i>how</i> he chose us in him before <i>the</i> overthrow of <i>the</i> world, for us to be holy and without blemish in his presence in love,	Blessed <i>be</i> the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly <i>places</i> in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:
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Holy here is the same word in Greek as the word for “saint”, as is widely the case in the New Testament. That believers are saints is clear from Romans 1:7

Rom 1:7	to all those <i>who</i> are in Rome, God's beloved, called <i>as</i> saints, grace to you and peace from God our father and Lord, Jesus Christ.	To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called <i>to be</i> saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.
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Leviticus 11:44 tells us that God is holy. Holiness implies being undefiled and set apart so as to be able to serve God. Israel and the Levitical priests in particular had to work hard at just a precursor of true holiness, by setting up the tent of contact (AV tabernacle) and building the temple, and performing duties exactly as God prescribed them.

There is a connection between holiness and a choice being made by God, both in Ephesians 1:4 quoted above and in Deuteronomy 7:6.

Deut 7:6	For you <i>are</i> a holy people to the LORD your God. The LORD your God chose you to be to him a people <i>who are</i> a special acquisition, out of all the <i>various</i> peoples that are on the face of the earth.	For thou <i>art</i> an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth.
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Note also the reference to a special acquisition (AV special people, purchased possession), tying in with Ephesians 1:14.

Eph 1:14	and he is <i>the</i> guarantee of our inheritance, until <i>the</i> redemption of the special possession, to <i>the</i> praise of his glory.	Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.
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The “holy of holies” was so extremely holy that only the high priest could go there, once a year, under cover of sacrifices. Yet here in Ephesians the believers in Jesus Christ are addressed as saints and are chosen to be holy. We are no longer regarded as earthly or defiled because God has

Col 1:13	transferred <i>us</i> into the kingdom of his beloved son,	translated <i>us</i> into the kingdom of his dear Son:
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and “his beloved (AV: dear) son” meets the highest possible standards of holiness and gives them to us too.

16. BEING WITHOUT BLEMISH (AV WITHOUT BLAME)

This blessing comes from Ephesians 1:4

Eph 1:4	according to <i>how</i> he chose us in him before <i>the</i> overthrow of <i>the</i> world, for us to be holy and without blemish in his presence in love,	According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:
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The word for “without blemish / without blame” is frequently used in the Greek Septuagint meaning “without blemish”, applied to the rams that were sacrificed. These rams had to be in perfect physical condition. These lambs without blemish point to Jesus as the **Lamb of God** (John 1:36). Jesus Christ is called a lamb without blemish and without spot in 1 Peter 1:19.

Our blessing is that we too will be without blemish, physically or morally. We will have perfect bodies:

Phil 3:20- 21	<i>the</i> Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body, so that it becomes conformant to his glorious body according to the force by which he is also able to subdue everything to himself.	the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.
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Our bodies will not only be perfect, they will be like the Lord's own glorious body!

What about the moral side? The expression “without blemish” applies to our new nature. In the resurrection, our old nature will be dead and we will be living entirely in our new sinless nature, with nothing to spoil our conduct. We will not do anything that would cause blemish or disgrace - in fact we will be unable to sin because

1 John 3:9	No-one who <i>has been</i> begotten by God commits sin, because his seed remains in him. And he cannot sin, because he has been begotten by God.	Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.
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However, God's power

Eph 1:20	which he exerted in Christ, when he raised him from the dead and seated <i>him</i> at his right <i>hand</i> in the upper-heavenly <i>places</i>,	Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set <i>him</i> at his own right hand in the heavenly <i>places</i>,
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is certainly available now and enables us to do

Eph 2:10	good works, which God prepared beforehand, to the intent that we should walk in them.	good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.
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(The word “now” occurs with reference to us in Eph 2:13, 3:5, 3:10, 5:8, and with reference to those who are disobedient in Eph 2:2.)

We have already seen that we have “justification”. That means that there is no legal case against us. Here in Ephesians we are associated more closely with Christ because we are given a quality so characteristic of Him: absence of any moral blemish.

An amazing feature is seen here and in many more of the Ephesian blessings: we are in various ways linked very intimately to the Lord Himself.

17. ADOPTION

Ephesians 1:5 says:

Eph 1:5	(God) appointed us beforehand for adoption through Jesus Christ	(God) predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ
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The Greek word for adoption literally means “son-placing” and implies being given inheritance rights as a son has. Some people think of the universe as their father, saying, “I am a child of the universe”, or they think of the earth as their mother. But the universe is a hard taskmaster. It gives no-one any rights. Disaster or death can strike at any time (for example disease or a lightning strike). If the universe is our father, we are in a terrible situation. But God is not like this. Imagine some very rich aristocrat going to an orphanage where the children live in a harsh regime without any love, and taking some child, maybe a dirty and bad-mannered one, and saying not just, “I’ll look after you”, but “I hereby adopt you as my son. You have all the legal rights of a son, and I will never revoke them.”

This is what God has done with us. God of course cleanses us and improves our manners as well (in fact we are “born again” through the word of God). He has placed us as His sons, giving us a right to blessings we could never have dreamed of.

Israel has an adoption as well - this time in an earthly context. When the Hebrews were slaves to the Egyptians, God instructed Moses to go to Pharaoh with the following instructions:

Ex 4:22- 23	“And you will say to Pharaoh, ‘This <i>is what</i> the LORD says: «Israel <i>is</i> my son, my firstborn. And I say to you, ‹Let my son go so that he <i>can</i> serve me.› And <i>if</i> you refuse to let him go, be aware that I will kill your son, your firstborn.» ’ ”	And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the LORD, Israel <i>is</i> my son, <i>even</i> my firstborn: And I say unto thee, Let my son go, that he may serve me: and if thou refuse to let him go, behold, I will slay thy son, <i>even</i> thy firstborn.
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So God has adopted Israel into a firstborn's position. Israel has a calling to serve God, and this they will do when God equips them to do it by bringing about the New Covenant. God says:

Jer 31:33	For this <i>is</i> the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put my law in their inner parts, and I will write it on their heart, and I will be God to them, and they will be a people to me.	But this <i>shall be</i> the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.
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This will make Israel a firstborn nation on earth,

1 Pet 2:9	an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people <i>destined to be</i> a special possession,	a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people;
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Israel will become great and educate this distracted world in the knowledge of God. Indeed,

Isa 60:12	For the nation and the kingdom which will not serve you Will perish, And <i>such</i> nations Will be utterly wasted.	For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, <i>those</i> nations shall be utterly wasted.
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Israel's restoration will be accompanied by a much-needed restoration of the land of Israel e.g.

Isa 35:6	... water will be laid open in the desert, As <i>will</i> streams in the arid tracts.	for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert.
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Presumably at that time, or a little later, there will be a spiritual restoration of the nations:

Is 11:9	For the earth will be filled <i>with</i> the knowledge of the LORD, As the waters cover the sea.	for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.
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Israel's adoption is still at the forefront in Romans:

Rom 9:4-5	Israelites, who <i>have</i> the adoption and the glory and the covenants and the instituting of the law and the service and the promises, of whom the fathers <i>are</i>, and from whom Christ <i>is</i> as regards <i>the</i> flesh, who is above all, God blessed throughout the ages. Amen.	Israelites; to whom <i>pertaineth</i> the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service <i>of God</i>, and the promises; Whose <i>are</i> the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ <i>came</i>, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.
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Israel is likened to an olive tree in Romans. Some Gentiles have been grafted in to provoke them to jealousy (Rom 11:11).

The position of the people forming the olive tree is dependent on them obeying the instruction to

Rom 11:22	remain in the kindness [of God]	continue in [God's] goodness
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The Gentiles were cautioned:

Rom 11:22	So see <i>the</i> kindness and severity of God: severity towards those <i>who have</i> fallen, but kindness to you, if you remain in the kindness, otherwise you will also be cut off.	Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in <i>his</i> goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.
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However, these people were, if willing, led by the Spirit of God, and

Rom 8:14-15	are <i>the</i> sons of God. For you have not received <i>the</i> spirit of bondage again, <i>leading</i> to fear, but you have received <i>the</i> spirit of adoption, by which we cry, "Abba, father."	are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.
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Also, despite some Israelites having stumbled, it was not beyond recovery (Rom 11:11), and it was known that eventually **all Israel will (AV shall) be saved** (Rom 11:26).

The adoption of Israel, even with Gentiles grafted in, is clearly different from the adoption in Ephesians.

Another Scripture dealing with adoption is Galatians 4:5.

Gal 4:4-5	But when the fulness of time had come, God sent out his son, born of a woman, born under <i>the</i> law, to redeem those under <i>the</i> law, so that we might receive the adoption,	But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.
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The Gentiles could even be counted as Abraham's seed:

Gal 3:26-29	For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For any of you who have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free <i>man</i>, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you <i>are</i> of Christ, then you are Abraham's seed and heirs according to <i>the</i> promise.	For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye <i>be</i> Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.
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This adoption is a secure possession of the Galatian believers, because Paul emphasizes that the believers are receiving a promise which cannot be set aside:

Gal 3:15	Brothers, I speak humanly: <i>it is just like the way</i> no-one annuls or adds to a man's covenant <i>which has been</i> confirmed.	Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; Though <i>it be</i> but a man's covenant, yet <i>if it be</i> confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto.
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This adoption is associated with the Jerusalem that is above:

Gal 4:26	But Jerusalem of above is free, and she is the mother of us all.	But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.
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This Jerusalem is also mentioned in Hebrews as the heavenly Jerusalem:

Heb 12:22	But you have come to Mount Zion and <i>the</i> city of <i>the</i> living God, <i>the</i> upper-heavenly Jerusalem, and myriads of angels,	But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels,
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Does the Galatian adoption apply to us? On the one hand “there is neither Jew nor Greek”, but on the other hand the adoption has a Jewish basis (a promise to Abraham) and outlook (the heavenly Jerusalem). It also has the Gentiles in mind:

Gal 3:13- 14	Christ has redeemed us ... <i>this being</i> in order that the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles by Christ Jesus, so that we might receive the promise of the spirit through faith.	Christ hath redeemed us ... That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.
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The Galatian adoption would appear to contain a lot of teaching about adoption which is relevant to us, but it does not seem to be identical to the Ephesian adoption, which belongs to a

Eph 3:4-5	mystery of Christ, which was not made known to other generations, to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by spirit,	mystery of Christ Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit;
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Our adoption is into an upper-heavenly family, in

Eph 1:3	in the upper-heavenly <i>places</i>	in heavenly <i>places</i>
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which are

Eph 1:21	far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name <i>which is</i> named, not only in this age, but also in the <i>one</i> to come,	Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:
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There is no mention of Abraham or anything typically Jewish, except for contrast¹. Presumably the heavenly realms here are far above even the authority, power and dominion of Jerusalem (earthly or heavenly) and titles associated with it (Zion, the Holy Mountain, etc.). It should not be surprising that the Ephesian adoption, which is addressed to Gentiles who were

¹ NIV's “with Israel”, CEV's “to the Jews”, GNT's “with the Jews”, GW's “as Jewish people do” and Weymouth's “with us Jews” (Ephesians 3:6) are translators' additions and the words do not occur in any Greek manuscript.

Eph 2:12	alienated from the citizenship of Israel	aliens from the commonwealth of Israel,
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should be different to Israel's adoption. After Acts 28:28 we might expect something different:

Acts 28:28	the salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will hear <i>it</i>.	the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and <i>that</i> they will hear it.
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What is surprising is where this blessing is based, and how high in the family we have been placed.

18. GLORIOUS GRACE (AV GLORY OF HIS GRACE)

The adoption which we have just seen is

Eph 1:5-6	according to the good pleasure of his will, to <i>the</i> praise of his glorious grace, with which he showed us grace in the beloved,	according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.
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The Israelites were taught about glory and grace. God's glory in the Old Testament was a display of power, used to teach Israel God's righteous ways, but it was a fearful thing to them. After the Israelites had grumbled against the Lord about their food in the desert,

Ex 16:10	<i>they</i> saw that the glory of the LORD had appeared in the cloud.	behold, the glory of the LORD appeared in the cloud.
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When the assembly talked about stoning Moses and Aaron because it thought it was better off in Egypt than in the desert, when

Num 14:10	the glory of the LORD appeared in the tent of contact to all the sons of Israel.	the glory of the LORD appeared in the tabernacle of the congregation before all the children of Israel.
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The principle of grace is also taught throughout the Old Testament, e.g. in 2 Kings 5 where Naaman is healed of leprosy free of charge, by obeying Elisha's instructions to simply wash himself seven times in the Jordan.

Israel looked forward to more glory and blessings at the coming of the Lord, but they were in an earthly context. Consider Isaiah 40:3-5

Isa 40:3-5	A voice calling in the desert, “Clear the way of the LORD; Make a straight highway in the arid	The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the
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<p>land For our God. Every valley will be raised, And every mountain and hill will be lowered, And what <i>is</i> steep will become level, And the rugged places A low plain. And the glory of the LORD will be revealed, And all flesh will see <i>it</i> together, For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.”</p>	<p>desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see <i>it</i> together: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken <i>it</i>.</p>
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Grace in the Old Testament is used in the sense of favour, sometimes merited favour, sometimes unmerited favour:

Ps 84:11	<p>For the LORD God <i>is</i> a sun and a shield, The LORD gives grace and honour; He does not withhold <i>what is</i> good From those who walk in integrity.</p>	<p>For the LORD God <i>is</i> a sun and shield: the LORD will give grace and glory: no good <i>thing</i> will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.</p>
Jer 31:1-2	<p>At that time, says the LORD, I will be God to all the families of Israel, and they will be a people to me. This <i>is what</i> the LORD says: The people <i>who</i> escaped the sword Have found grace in the desert, <i>Through me</i> taking steps to give them rest – Israel, <i>that is</i>.</p>	<p>At the same time, saith the LORD, will I be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be my people. Thus saith the LORD, The people <i>which were</i> left of the sword found grace in the wilderness; <i>even</i> Israel, when I went to cause him to rest.</p>

In Ephesians, the glorious grace is freely given in the One God loves. This is, of course, God's beloved Son, Jesus Christ, and in Him God's glory is revealed:

John 1:14	<p>And the word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, glory as of <i>the</i> only-begotten from <i>the</i> father, full of grace and truth.</p>	<p>And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.</p>
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Grace is itself a free gift, and in Ephesians its freeness is emphasized (the Greek of Eph 1:6 reads literally “grace in which he graced us”). We cannot earn God's gifts even by paying with gold and silver, but God gives them to us freely and willingly, provided we access them through Jesus Christ.

This is a principle found in many parts of Scripture, e.g.

1 Pet 1:18- 19	knowing that you were not redeemed by perishable <i>things</i>, silver or gold, from your vain comportment <i>as</i> handed down from the fathers,	Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, <i>as</i> silver and gold, from your vain conversation <i>received</i> by tradition from your fathers;
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The grace freely given in Ephesians is called glorious. This is because the Lord is glorious and the gifts He gives us are at the level of His own glory!
God has

Eph 2:5	made us ... alive together with Christ	quickened us together with Christ
Eph 2:6	and he raised <i>us</i> together and seated <i>us</i> together in the upper-heavenly <i>places</i> in Christ Jesus,	And hath raised <i>us</i> up together, and made <i>us</i> sit together in heavenly <i>places</i> in Christ Jesus:

and our resurrection body is actually like His glorious body:

Phil 3:20- 21	for our citizenship is in <i>the</i> heavens, from where we also await a saviour, <i>the</i> Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body, so that it becomes conformant to his glorious body according to the force by which he is also able to subdue everything to himself.	For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.
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All our blessings in Ephesians make us partakers of the Lord's glory, because we have

Eph 1:3	every spiritual blessing in the upper-heavenly <i>places</i> in Christ,	all spiritual blessings in heavenly <i>places</i> in Christ:
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We lowly creatures have been raised to inexpressible heights, together with Christ. We will be seeing why this is in more detail later, but basically it is because God loves us and it is His will (1 John 4:19 and Eph 1:5).

19. REDEMPTION and (cf. Nr. 2) FORGIVENESS OF TRANSGRESSIONS (AV OF SINS)

In Him (the One God loves, Jesus Christ) we have

Eph 1:7	redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of transgressions, according to the richness of his grace,	redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;
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In Old Testament times, the Israelites were often “redeemed” when they were in a sticky situation. Here are some examples:

The Israelites were redeemed from bondage in Egypt - God said

Ex 6:6	I will redeem you with an outstretched arm	I will redeem you with a stretched out arm,
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and did just that.

In the book of Ruth, Naomi and her daughter-in-law Ruth had some land redeemed by Boaz, and in the same transaction Ruth became Boaz's wife and the family name was not struck off the registry records (i.e. the name of Elimelech Naomi's late husband, and Chilion and Mahlon her late sons). In this way Ruth entered into the line of descent to Christ; she was king David's great-grandmother.

David was also redeemed, or delivered, out of difficulties, e.g. 2 Sam 4:9.

Israel will be redeemed from their sins:

Ps 130:7-8	O Israel, await the LORD, For with the LORD <i>there is</i> kindness, And with him <i>there is</i> much redemption. And he will redeem Israel From all its iniquities.	Let Israel hope in the LORD: for with the LORD <i>there is</i> mercy, and with him <i>is</i> plenteous redemption. And he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities.
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We have the same problem - sin. Redemption from this particular sticky situation is called forgiveness of sins, which we have already seen (blessing Nr. 2). Redemption is the act or process that achieves the forgiveness of sins, and we are reminded of the horrific price that had to be paid by the phrase “through his blood”.

20. RICHNESS (AV RICHES)

King Solomon was the richest person in Israel. When God said to him,

1 Ki 3:5	“Ask what <i>you want</i> me to give you.”	Ask what I shall give thee.
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Solomon asked for

1 Ki 3:9	a heart <i>fit</i> to hear <i>cases at law</i> in judging your people, to discern good from evil,	an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad:
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The Lord was pleased that Solomon had asked for this. So God said to him

1 Ki 3:11- 3:14	And God said to him, “Since you have asked for this thing, and you did not ask for a long life, and you did not ask for riches, and you did not ask for the life of your enemies, but you asked for understanding in hearing cases at law, look, I have done according to your words – look, I have given you a wise and astute heart, such as never was before you, and such as never will arise after you. And I have also given you what you didn't ask for, both riches and honour, whereby no man among kings will be like you all your days. And if you walk in my ways, by keeping my statutes and my commandments, as David your father did, then I will prolong your days.”	And God said unto him, Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life; neither hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies; but hast asked for thyself understanding to discern judgment; Behold, I have done according to thy words: lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart; so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee. And I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches, and honour: so that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee all thy days. And if thou wilt walk in my ways, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as thy father David did walk, then I will lengthen thy days.
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God made Solomon fabulously rich - he had a huge house (1 Kings 7) and vast amounts of gold (1 Kings 10).

1 Ki 10:23	And King Solomon became greater than all the kings of the earth, in riches and in wisdom.	So king Solomon exceeded all the kings of the earth for riches and for wisdom.
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In Ephesians, we have far greater riches still. We have

- the richness (AV riches) of his grace (Eph 1:7)
- the wealth (AV riches) of the glory of his inheritance in holy *places* (AV the saints) (Eph 1:18)
- the exceeding richness (AV riches) of his grace (Eph 2:7)
- the untraceable richness (AV unsearchable riches) of Christ (Eph 3:8)

- the richness (AV riches) of his glory (Eph 3:16)

These riches will never pass away. They are glorious and are our inheritance in the heavenly realms.

21. MAKING KNOWN (OF THE MYSTERY)

In Ephesians 1:9-10, God is credited with

Eph 1:9-10	having made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure, <i>good pleasure</i> which he planned in him, with a view to <i>the</i> dispensation of the fulness of times, to head up all <i>things</i> in Christ, those above the heavens and those on the earth,	Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; <i>even</i> in him:
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God has with “all wisdom and thoughtfulness (AV prudence)” made a mystery known. The mystery is not something previously revealed, but is something which Paul reveals in the epistle to the Ephesians.

Eph 3:2-3:7	if indeed you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which <i>has been</i> given to me for you, <i>namely</i> that by revelation he made the mystery known to me, as I wrote before briefly, in the light of which by reading you can appreciate my understanding of the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to other generations, to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by spirit, that the Gentiles should be joint heirs and a joint body, and joint partakers of his promise in Christ through the gospel, of which I have become a minister by the gift of the grace of God which <i>was</i> given to me by the exertion of his power,	If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel: Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power.
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The basis of the mystery is that the Gentiles are heirs to blessings in Christ not made known to men in other generations, but revealed for the first time in Ephesians. The Gentiles are joint heirs (AV

fellowheirs) and do not need to become associated with Israel, and was previously the case, e.g. in Romans 11 where the Gentiles are grafted in to the olive tree which represents Israel. As Colossians tells us, the Jews are equal with the Gentiles in this dispensation:

Col 3:11	where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave <i>nor</i> free <i>man</i>, but Christ, <i>who is</i> all and in all.	Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond <i>nor</i> free: but Christ <i>is</i> all, and in all.
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However, this dispensation does not permanently replace Israel's calling. That would leave a vast amount of prophesy in a dead-end street, e.g.

Jer 31:31	Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah.	Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah:
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Moreover, Israel's national blindness, which coincides with salvation being sent to the Gentiles, is temporary. Just before Paul said that **The salvation of God has been sent to (AV is sent unto) the Gentiles** (Acts 28:28), he spoke Acts 28:26-27 (which quotes Isaiah 6:9-10):

Acts 28:26-27	‘Go to this people and say, «You will definitely hear But certainly not understand, And you will definitely see But certainly not perceive, For the heart of this people has become obtuse, And with <i>their</i> ears they hear in a dull way, And they have closed their eyes, Lest they should see with <i>their</i> eyes, And hear with <i>their</i> ears, And understand with <i>their</i> heart, And repent, And I would heal them.»’	Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive: For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with <i>their</i> eyes, and hear with <i>their</i> ears, and understand with <i>their</i> heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.
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When Isaiah was commissioned to announce this prophesy, he must have been very disturbed. His first thought was when this condition of his people would end. He asked the Lord,

Isa 6:11	For how long <i>is it</i>, LORD?	Lord, how long?
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The answer is until a lot of tribulation in the land, described in Isaiah 6:11-13, but the point being

made here is that Israel's blindness is temporary.

Hosea confirms that the people who are at some time (now!) not God's people, will become God's people:

Hos 1:10	And the number of the sons of Israel will be as the sand of the sea, which <i>cannot</i> be measured and <i>cannot</i> be counted, and it will come to pass that in the place where it was said to them, ‘You <i>are</i> not my people’, it will be said to them, ‘You <i>are</i> the sons of the living GOD.’	Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered; and it shall come to pass, <i>that</i> in the place where it was said unto them, Ye <i>are</i> not my people, <i>there</i> it shall be said unto them, Ye <i>are</i> the sons of the living God.
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So Israel has a calling, and will become God's people, but the Gentiles also have a calling, and a very high one at that, and do not need to seek incorporation into or supplanting of Israel's calling.

22. JOINT HEIRSHIP (AV FELLOWHEIRSHIP)

Ephesians 3:6 gives us the blessing

Eph 3:6	that the Gentiles should be joint heirs	That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs
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Israel's most well-known blessing is the land which God promised to Abraham as an inheritance.

Gen 12:1	Then the LORD said to Abram, “Get going out of your land And from your native country And from your father's house To the land which I will show you. ...”	Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee:
Gen 15:7	And he said to him, “I <i>am</i> the LORD who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give you this land, <i>for you</i> to inherit it.”	And he said unto him, I <i>am</i> the LORD that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it.

But Israel is also described as God's inheritance.

Isa 19:25	because the LORD of hosts will bless it and say, ‘Blessed <i>is</i> my people Egypt, and the work of my hands Assyria, and my inheritance Israel.’	Whom the LORD of hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed <i>be</i> Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance.
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This is quite amazing! God condescends to call an earthly nation His inheritance. What good are we to Him? God of course can change us so that we are of use to Him.

The situation is similar in Ephesians. We have been made heirs for a purpose, as is seen in our next blessing.

23. THE PRAISE OF HIS GLORY

We are made heirs for a purpose:

Eph 1:12	that we should be <i>the</i> praise of his glory, <i>we</i> who put our hope in Christ previously,	That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.
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Here is grace indeed! We used to be totally unprofitable to God, and were at enmity with him, but now we are to be held up so that people praise his glory! Again, we might seem to have been exalted too high, but God through Christ really has given us this exceedingly high inheritance.

24. A SEAL

We have been sealed:

Eph 1:13	after you believed, you were sealed by the holy spirit of promise,	after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,
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A seal is a sign of an irrevocable decision. In the book of Esther we read that Haman persuaded King Ahasuerus to issue a decree to persecute the Jews. The decree was sealed (Est 3:12) with the king's ring. After Esther, the queen, had revealed herself as one of the Jewish people, King Ahasuerus could not revoke the first decree, and had to issue a new decree, enabling the Jews to defend themselves. This decree too was sealed and could not be revoked:

Esth 8:8	Write to the Jews as <i>seems</i> right in your sight, in the name of the king, and seal it with the king's ring, for <i>any</i> writing which is written in the name of the king and is sealed with the king's seal <i>cannot</i> be rescinded.	Write ye also for the Jews, as it liketh you, in the king's name, and seal <i>it</i> with the king's ring: for the writing which is written in the king's name, and sealed with the king's ring, may no man reverse.
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Our blessings are absolutely secure:

Eph 1:13- 14	after you believed, you were sealed by the holy spirit of promise, and he is <i>the</i> guarantee of our inheritance, until <i>the</i> redemption of the special possession, to <i>the</i> praise of his glory.	after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.
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In fact our blessings are in the safest possible place - with God. Our life is also in this safe place, as Colossians tells us:

Col 3:3	for you have died, and your life has been hidden with Christ in God.	For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.
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The seal is the Holy Spirit, which has been discussed in connection with the righteousness it imparts under blessing numbers 5 and 6.

25. HOPE

Paul prays:

Eph 1:18	<i>and give you eyes of your heart which have been</i> enlightened, so that you may know what the hope of his calling is, and what the wealth of the glory of his inheritance in holy <i>places is,</i>	The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,
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We have been called to a hope, although we may not be (fully) enlightened about it. That is why Paul prays for enlightenment.

Hope in Scripture is not a probability or a gamble. It is a definite expectation, and belief, that God will fulfil His promises. Paul prays that we may know the hope to which we have been called. It would be a pity if we were to think we had a different inheritance to the one we have. Knowing that God has

Eph 2:6	raised <i>us</i> together and seated <i>us</i> together in the upper-heavenly <i>places</i> in Christ Jesus	raised <i>us</i> up together, and made <i>us</i> sit together in heavenly <i>places</i> in Christ Jesus
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should help us distinguish our calling from other peoples' callings such as that where

Matt 5:5	Blessed <i>are</i> the meek, For they shall inherit the earth.	Blessed <i>are</i> the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.
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The better you know the hope of your calling, the better you can

Eph 4:1	walk worthy of the calling with which you have been called,	walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,
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So let us study the Ephesian blessings in chapters 1, 2 and 3 carefully and walk worthy of them using the teaching of chapters 4, 5 and 6 to guide our walk.

26. EXCEEDING GREATNESS OF HIS POWER

There is an exceedingly great power in Ephesians which Paul wants us to be enlightened about. He prays

Eph 1:17- 19	that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the father of glory, may give you ... eyes of your heart <i>which have been</i> enlightened, so that you may know ... what the exceeding greatness of his power <i>is</i> in us who believe, according to the action of his strong might,	That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you ... The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know ... what <i>is</i> the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power,
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The exceedingly great power is not an earthly power, nor is it related to this creation. Creation is a certain demonstration of God's power:

Rom 1:20	For the invisible <i>attributes</i> of him, from <i>the</i> creation of <i>the</i> world, are understood and caught sight of in the things made: his perpetual power and deity, so that they are without excuse,	For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, <i>even</i> his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:
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But God has got power beyond physical forces known to man. The exceedingly great power of Ephesians is the power

Eph 1:20	which he exerted in Christ, when he raised him from the dead and seated <i>him</i> at his right <i>hand</i> in the upper-heavenly <i>places</i>,	Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set <i>him</i> at his own right hand in the heavenly <i>places</i>,
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This is a different kind of power, and is invisible to the world at large. This power is available to us now. Paul says in Philippians:

Phil 3:10	so as to know him and the power of his resurrection	That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection,
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This is the power that should be driving us in our daily lives. It enables us to live in the new nature, and to share sufferings like Christ's, as the rest of the above verse in Philippians indicates:

Phil 3:10	and the fellowship of his sufferings, being conformed to his death,	and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;
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Christ defeated death not with a show of force but by suffering death Himself. But He was raised up by a phenomenal power. This power has been given to us, enabling us both to suffer in a similar way to the way Christ did, and to have everlasting resurrection life, which started when we believed in Christ and were born of God. Although we will die, in the resurrection our newness of life will continue without any disturbance from our old nature (or anyone else's).

27. MAKING ALIVE (AV QUICKENING) WITH CHRIST and
28. RAISING WITH CHRIST and
29. SEATING (AV MAKING SIT) WITH CHRIST

The Scripture giving us these blessings is:

Eph 2:4-6	but God, being rich in mercy, on account of his great love <i>with</i> which he loved us, made us, being dead to transgressions, alive together with Christ – you have been saved by grace – and he raised <i>us</i> together and seated <i>us</i> together in the upper- heavenly <i>places</i> in Christ Jesus,	But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised <i>us</i> up together, and made <i>us</i> sit together in heavenly <i>places</i> in Christ Jesus:
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We have already considered the blessing of everlasting life (blessing Nr. 1), and have seen that resurrection is both Old and New Testament doctrine.

What we have here in Ephesians is also resurrection and eternal life, but with a special emphasis on togetherness with Christ.

We are made alive, raised up and seated together with Christ Himself, in the place where He sits. This is done by the same power that was exerted in Him. In the Greek there is just one word for “making-alive-with”, and for “raising-up-with” and for “seating-with”, which emphasizes the fact that we are completely associated with Christ.

Christ really is sharing everything He has with us, his glory and even the place in the heavenly realms where he sits.

30. SALVATION

As we saw above,

Eph 2:5		you have been saved by grace		by grace ye are saved
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What have we been saved from? All the opposites (where possible) to our blessings! That gives us so far: death, culpability, condemnation, enmity, a carnal mind, iniquity, hatred, sorrow, impatience, unkindness, evil, faithlessness, sternness, debauchery, profanity, blame, orphanhood, baseness, bondage, poverty, ignorance, disappropriation, contempt, insecurity, hopelessness and powerlessness.

The opposites of the ones to come are: remoteness, hostile division, preclusion from access, alienation, rootlessness, homelessness, non-membership of the body, exclusion from the promise, trepidation.

Some of these qualities pertain to life in this world; others are of consequence beyond that.

31. BEING MADE NEAR (AV NIGH)

Once we Gentiles had nothing to do with God's covenants:

Eph 2:12		[Remember] that you were at that time without Christ, alienated from the citizenship of Israel and strangers to the covenants of the promise, not having <i>any</i> hope and without God in the world,		[Remember] That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world:
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Israel had a unique position. God asks,

Deut 4:8		And what great nation <i>is there</i> that <i>has</i> righteous statutes and regulations according to all this law which I am placing before you today?		And what nation <i>is there so</i> great, that hath statutes and judgments <i>so</i> righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day?
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But things have changed now:

Eph
2:13

**but now in Christ Jesus you who
were once far off have been made
near by the blood of Christ,**

**But now in Christ Jesus ye who
sometimes were far off are made
nigh by the blood of Christ.**

This doesn't mean that we have citizenship in Israel, but that we stand in a close relationship with God through Jesus Christ. We don't need to be frightened about being so near because Christ has made us fit to be so close - it is not dependent on our works, but "the blood of Christ".

32. RECONCILIATION and

33. ACCESS TO THE FATHER

The context is of Jews and Gentiles being reconciled to each other and to God. The result is access to the Father by one Spirit.

Eph
2:14-
2:18

**for he is our peace, who made both
one and demolished the middle wall
of partition, having abolished the
enmity by his flesh, the law of the
commandments in ordinances, in
order that he might create the two
in himself into one new man,
making peace, and reconcile both in
one body to God through the cross,
having eradicated the enmity by it.
And he came and preached peace to
you who *were* far off and to those
who were near, for through him
both *of us* have access by one spirit
to the father.**

**For he is our peace, who hath made
both one, and hath broken down the
middle wall of partition *between us*;
Having abolished in his flesh the
enmity, *even* the law of
commandments *contained* in
ordinances; for to make in himself
of twain one new man, *so* making
peace; And that he might reconcile
both unto God in one body by the
cross, having slain the enmity
thereby And came and preached
peace to you which were afar off,
and to them that were nigh. For
through him we both have access by
one Spirit unto the Father.**

Gentiles used to be completely unreconciled to God, and had no access to the Father. Jews could obtain God's favour by being obedient, and also had some degree of access to God in the tent of contact (AV tabernacle) and the temple, but only via Levitical priests.

Now both Jew and Gentile have complete access through Christ, Who incidentally is also a priest, but not a Levitical one, but one of the order of Melchizedek. For more details read Hebrews 7:17, Psalm 110:4, Genesis 14:18.

34. JOINT CITIZENSHIP (AV FELLOWCITIZENSHIP)

We have a citizenship far better than anything guaranteed on a passport:

Eph 2:19	So then, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but joint citizens of the holy <i>places</i> and <i>are</i> God's household residents,	Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God;
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35. FOUNDATION and
36. SANCTUARY (AV TEMPLE) and
37. DWELLING PLACE (AV HABITATION) OF GOD

We have the foundation and become the holy sanctuary, the innermost part of a temple, and God is prepared to dwell in us. Compare with the temple in Jerusalem how we are

Eph 2:20- 22	built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being <i>the</i> keystone, in whom every building, <i>as it is</i> fitted together, grows into a holy sanctuary in <i>the</i> Lord, in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling place of God in spirit.	And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner <i>stone</i>; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.
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We have met the indwelling Spirit before (blessing Nr. 5). It still leaves us breath-taken that God should be prepared to come and live in us.

(Cf. Nr. 22) JOINT HEIRSHIP (AV FELLOWHEIRSHIP) and
38. MEMBERSHIP OF ONE BODY and
39. JOINT PARTAKERS (AV PARTAKERS) OF HIS PROMISE

These are key elements of the mystery:

Eph 3:6	that the Gentiles should be joint heirs and a joint body, and joint partakers of his promise in Christ through the gospel,	That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:
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We have seen earlier that we have been “made heirs”, but that the Greek does not say “with Israel”. Here the emphasis is not on what the inheritance is, but the fact that we are in close contact with Christ, as we were with the making-alive-with Christ, and raising-with Christ, and seating-with Christ in heavenly realms.

We are also members of **one body** (Eph 4:4, FAA/AV), and that body is actually Christ's body; **for**

we are members of his body (Eph 5:30, FAA/AV).

The identification with Christ is so complete that we are members of His body! We are also joint partakers of his promise in Christ Jesus. Does “joint” mean you and I and the other believers together? It could go further than this, and the meaning could be *together with Christ*, because we have the same Greek prefixed preposition, making “partakers-together” just one word, as in the other joint blessings with Christ. Apparently, Christ shares with us in looking forward to what is promised. What is promised? Paul has received a gospel from the Lord to preach; he says

Eph 3:7-9	[the gospel] of which I have become a minister by the gift of the grace of God which <i>was</i> given to me by the exertion of his power, to me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given: to preach among the Gentiles the untraceable richness of Christ, and to enlighten everyone <i>as to</i> what the dispensation of the mystery <i>is</i>, which <i>was</i> hidden from the ages in God, who created all <i>things</i> through Jesus Christ,	[the gospel] Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power. Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; And to make all <i>men</i> see what <i>is</i> the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:
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Paul is preaching the untraceable riches of Christ, and we are partakers in this promise with each other and with Christ Himself.

40. ASSURANCE (AV BOLDNESS) and (cf. Nr 33) ACCESS IN (AV WITH) CONFIDENCE

The Scripture is:

Eph 3:12	in whom we have assurance and access in confidence through his faithfulness,	In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.
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We have already seen that we may approach God - the “access” of Eph 2:18. The “assurance” or “boldness” has a basic meaning of “outspokenness” or “plainness of speech”, but the meaning extends to “courage” and “boldness”, especially in the presence of persons of high rank, according to Walter Bauer's Lexicon.

Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon wanted certain children of Israel, who were there in exile, in his court and gave instructions to find

Dan 1:4	children in whom <i>was</i> no blemish, and <i>who were</i> good-looking and insightful in all wisdom, and <i>who</i> were knowledgeable and <i>who</i> understood science, and who <i>had</i> the mettle to stand in the king's palace.	Children in whom <i>was</i> no blemish, but well favoured, and skilful in all wisdom, and cunning in knowledge, and understanding science, and such as <i>had</i> ability in them to stand in the king's palace,
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Nebuchadnezzar was looking for people with self-assurance or boldness. He was given Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah.

In Ephesians, the “Person of high rank” is higher than Nebuchadnezzar. We are talking about approaching God. As we have seen, we need not be at all nervous about approaching God. Christ has made us fit to approach, and this last blessing counted in this booklet tells us we can also confidently speak in the presence of our heavenly Father.

HOW MANY BLESSINGS DO WE HAVE?

There must be many more blessings than those included here. Maybe one way to find them all is to check out the entire vocabulary of the Bible. This study has followed a particular path through the Bible and has covered the blessings on that path. There may even be more blessings on this path. Sometimes an adverbial expression is used - e.g. “in kindness” (Eph 2:7), “in confidence” (Eph 3:12) which we have omitted but which maybe should have been included as a blessing itself. An example of a blessing on a different path is: “a place in the Father's house” (John 14:2). There must be many more.

WHY HAS GOD GIVEN US THESE BLESSINGS?

The answer is because God loves us and he wants us to have them.

Rom 5:8	But God commends his own love to us, because while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.	But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.
1 John 4:10	This <i>is</i> how love is <i>evident</i>: not in that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his son <i>as</i> a propitiation for our sins.	Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son <i>to be</i> the propitiation for our sins.
Eph 1:3-5	Blessed <i>be</i> the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who <i>has</i> blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the upper-heavenly <i>places</i> in Christ,	Blessed <i>be</i> the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly <i>places</i> in Christ:

according to *how* he chose us in him before *the* overthrow of *the* world, for us to be holy and without blemish in his presence in love, having appointed us beforehand for adoption through Jesus Christ to him, according to the good pleasure of his will,

According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,

The blessings we have counted are God's gift to man. They are free of charge to us, but to God they are priceless in the sense of being extremely valuable. The price God paid was enormous. Having announced the work of the Son beforehand, God sent His Son, Who came to do God's will:

Ps
40:7-8

Then I said,
“Behold, I have come.
In the scroll of the book *it stands*
written concerning me:
‘I delight to do your will,
O God of mine,
And your law *is* in my inner
parts.’ ”

Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book *it is* written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law *is* within my heart.

What was God's will which the Son obeyed? Something terrible:

Phil
2:5-2:8

Christ Jesus, who, existing in *the* form of God, did not consider being equal to God *to be* misappropriation, yet he emptied himself, having taken *on the* status of a servant, having come in *the* appearance of men, and having been found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient to *the extent of* death, and *the death of the cross* at that,

Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

He who underwent these terrible things was Himself equal with God, and was also Himself without sin (Heb 4:15). Yet the Son undergoes it all willingly for us, saying

Ps
40:8

I delight to do your will,
O God of mine,

I delight to do thy will, O my God:

See how much the Son loves us, even though we are sinners, in that He willingly underwent so much despising and a humiliating death at our hands.

The Old Testament teaches the principle of sacrifice for sins. In the New Testament we learn that Christ was a once-and-for-all sacrifice for sin:

Heb 10:10	And by this will we have been sanctified, we <i>who are so</i> through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once <i>and for all</i>.	By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once <i>for all</i>.
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Isaiah 53 tells of the same events:

Isa 53:3-5	He was despised and repudiated by men – A man of sorrows and acquainted with affliction – While <i>we were</i> like a person hiding <i>his</i> face from him. He was despised, And we did not esteem him. Surely he has borne our ailments And taken the weight of our sorrows, But we considered him stricken – Struck by God and afflicted. He was wounded for our transgressions; He was bruised for our iniquities. The punishment for our peace <i>was</i> on him, And by his weals Our healing came.	He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were <i>our</i> faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he <i>was</i> wounded for our transgressions, <i>he was</i> bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace <i>was</i> upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.
Isa 53:9	Because he did no violence, And <i>there was</i> no deceit in his mouth.	because he had done no violence, neither <i>was any</i> deceit in his mouth.
Isa 53:12	He poured out his being to death, And he was counted with the transgressors, And he bore the sin of many, And he pleaded for the transgressors.	he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

However, do not sit despondently contemplating His lot, for He has been raised up from the dead and is alive. This too was announced beforehand, both in type (the firstfruits at the Passover - Leviticus 23) and directly:

Isa 53:11- 12	<p>He will see <i>the result</i> of his inward toil; He will be satisfied.</p> <p>...</p> <p>That <i>is</i> why I will apportion him among the great,</p>	<p>He shall see of the travail of his soul, <i>and</i> shall be satisfied: ... Therefore will I divide him <i>a portion</i> with the great,</p>
Ps 16:9- 11	<p>That <i>is</i> why my heart is glad And my mind rejoices; My flesh also dwells in security. For you will not leave my being in the grave, Nor will you allow your holy <i>one</i> to see decay. You have made the way of life known to me. <i>There is</i> an abundance of joys in your presence, <i>And there are</i> pleasant <i>things</i> in perpetuity at your right hand.</p>	<p>Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope.</p> <p>For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.</p> <p>Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence <i>is</i> fulness of joy; at thy right hand <i>there are</i> pleasures for evermore.</p>

The New Testament reminds us of the firstfruit:

1 Cor 15:20	<p>But as it is, Christ has been raised from <i>the</i> dead. He has become <i>the</i> firstfruit of those <i>who have</i> fallen asleep.</p>	<p>But now is Christ risen from the dead, <i>and</i> become the firstfruits of them that slept.</p>
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In view of the fact that the Lord is risen from the dead, it is appropriate to give the sequel to the quotation from Philippians above:

Phil 2:9-11	<p>which <i>is</i> why God has also greatly exalted him and has granted him a name above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in the upper-heavens and on earth and underground, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ <i>is</i> Lord, to <i>the</i> glory of God <i>the</i> father.</p>	<p>Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of <i>things</i> in heaven, and <i>things</i> in earth, and <i>things</i> under the earth; And <i>that</i> every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ <i>is</i> Lord, to the glory of God the Father.</p>
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WHAT CAN WE SAY TO ALL THIS?

To begin with:

2 Cor 9:15	Thanks <i>be</i> to God for his indescribable gift.	Thanks <i>be</i> unto God for his unspeakable gift.
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In view of the fact that

Eph 1:3	the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ ... <i>has</i> blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the upper-heavenly <i>places</i> in Christ,	the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ ... hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly <i>places</i> in Christ:
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it would appear appropriate to close with Paul's prayer for the Ephesians:

Eph 3:14- 21	For this reason I bow my knees to the father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom every family in <i>the</i> heavens and on earth is named, that he may grant you, according to the richness of his glory, to be strengthened by power through his spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell through faith in your hearts, that you, being rooted and founded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what the breadth and length and depth and height <i>are</i>, and to know the love of Christ, which surpasses knowledge, in order that you may be filled to <i>the extent of</i> all the fulness of God. To him <i>who is</i> able to do superabundantly beyond everything which we ask or conceive of, according to the power exerted in us, to him <i>be</i> glory in the church by Christ Jesus in all the generations of the age of the ages. Amen.	For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what <i>is</i> the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto him <i>be</i> glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.
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APPENDIX - Greek words for, and a reference to, the blessings

Nr.	Ref	FAA (+ AV where it differs)	GREEK ground form, transliterated
1.	John 3:16	Age-abiding (AV Eternal) life	zoe aionios
2.	Acts 10:43	Forgiveness (AV Remission) of sins	aphesis + hamartia
3.	Rom 4:25	Justification	dikaiosis
4.	Rom 5:1	Peace with God	eirene pros ton theon
5.	Eph 1:13	Holy spirit (AV Spirit)	pneuma hagion
6.	Rom 6:18	Righteousness	dikaiosune
7.	Gal 5:22	Love	agape
8.	Gal 5:22	Joy	chara
Cf. 4.	Gal 5:22	Peace	eirene
9.	Gal 5:22	Longsuffering	makrothumia
10.	Gal 5:22	Kindness (AV Gentleness)	chrestotes
11.	Gal 5:22	Goodness	agathosune
12.	Gal 5:22	Faith	pistis
13.	Gal 5:23	Meekness	praotes
14.	Gal 5:23	Self-control (AV Temperance)	enkrateia
15.	Eph 1:4	Holy (holiness)	hagios (hagiotēs, Heb 12:10)
16.	Eph 1:4	Without blemish (AV Without blame)	amomos
17.	Eph 1:5	Adoption	huiothesia
18.	Eph 1:6	Gracious glory (AV Glory of his grace)	doxa + charis
19.	Eph 1:7	Redemption	apolutrosis
Cf. 2.	Eph 1:7	Forgiveness of transgressions (AV of sins)	aphesis + paraptoma
20.	Eph 1:7	Richness (AV Riches) of his grace	ploutos + charis
21.	Eph 1:9	Made known	gnorizo
22.	Eph 1:11	Heirship ¹	kleroo (kleronomia, Eph 1:14)
23.	Eph 1:12	Praise of his glory	epainos + doxa
24.	Eph 1:13	Sealed	sphragizo
25.	Eph 1:18	Hope called to	elpis + klesis
26.	Eph 1:19	Exceeding greatness of his power	hyperballon megethos + dunamis
27.	Eph 2:5	Making alive (AV Quickening) with Christ	sunzoopoieo toi Christoi
28.	Eph 2:6	Raising with and ...	sunegeiro
29.	Eph 2:6	Seating (AV Making sit) with Christ	sunkathizo en Christoi
30.	Eph 2:8	Saved	sozo
31.	Eph 2:13	Being made near (AV nigh)	engus + ginomai
32.	Eph 2:16	Reconciliation	apokatallasso
33.	Eph 2:18	Access to the father (AV unto the Father)	prosagoge pros ton patera
34.	Eph 2:19	Joint citizens (AV Fellowcitizens)	sumpolites
35.	Eph 2:20	Foundation	themelios
36.	Eph 2:21	Sanctuary (AV Temple)	naos
37.	Eph 2:22	Dwelling place (AV Habitation) of God	katoiketerion tou theou

¹ From the concept of receiving (AV obtaining) an inheritance.

Cf. 22. Eph 3:6	Joint heirs (AV Fellowheirs)	sunkleronomos
38. Eph 3:6	Membership of one body	sussoma
39. Eph 3:6	Joint partakers (AV Partakers) of his promise	summetochos + epangelia
40. Eph 3:12	Assurance (AV Boldness)	parresia
Cf. 33. Eph 3:12	Access in (AV Access with) confidence	prosagoge + pepoithesis

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