

EPHESIANS: LIVING IN ALIGNMENT WITH OUR HIGH CALLING

Part I: Our High Calling In Christ, Ephesians 1:1-3:21

A. God's Astounding Goal Of Our High Calling In Christ (Ephesians 1:1-6)

I. Introduction

- A. Ephesians was the only epistle of Paul's prison epistles we have been studying that was meant to be circulated among several churches as seen in part by its lack of address to any individuals, Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, p. 1672, "Introduction to the Letter of Paul to the Ephesians."
- B. The theme of Ephesians is then very broad, one in which Paul meant to direct the Church universal in a realm of great importance for it, that realm being the need for believers to understand their high calling of God in Christ so as to live in their earthly lives in alignment with that calling, cf. Ephesians 4:1.
- C. To begin such a letter, Paul described the astounding goal of the believer's high calling of God in Christ in Ephesians 1:1-6, and we view it for our insight and edification (as follows):

II. God's Astounding Goal Of Our High Calling In Christ, Ephesians 1:1-6.

- A. God is highly motivated to communicate to us His astounding goal of our high calling in Christ, Eph. 1:1-2:
 1. Showing the *importance* of what Paul was about to describe of our high calling, he testified that he was an **apostle of Christ by God's will** to the saints not only at Ephesus, but to **all the faithful in Christ**, Eph. 1:1.
 2. The Lord wants us first of all to realize His unmerited favor, His grace, with its resulting peace when that grace is applied to life, is directed to us in His Son, Jesus Christ, Ephesians 1:2.
- B. God thus **earnestly** wants **us** to know that He has an *astounding goal* produced by His unmerited favor that aims to produce peace in our hearts due to His high calling of us in His Son, Jesus Christ, Ephesians 1:3-6:
 1. Paul expressed great praise of God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ Who has **positionally** blessed us believers with **all spiritual blessings** in the heavens in Christ, Ephesians 1:3. There is no need for some future "Second Blessing" or series of such blessings to be attained -- we have it all in our Savior! (v. 3)
 2. These spiritual blessings of our position in Christ in the heavenlies are in alignment with God's selection of us in Christ before the creation of the universe that we should be holy and blameless in His heavenly presence in love, Ephesians 1:4:
 - a. Calvinists claim this verse means God chose who would believe in Christ to be saved while Arminians claim it means God chose who would be saved based on God's foreknowledge of who would believe.
 - b. However, an election unto justification is simply not Paul's theme here, for the word rendered "before" in the phrase "before him" (KJV) is the Greek term *katenopion*, and it does **NOT** carry the Hebraistic, **figurative** meaning of God's **viewpoint**, but the **literal** meaning of God's "**presence**" in **heaven!** (U. B. S. Grk. N. T., 1966, p. 664; Moulton & Milligan, The Vocabulary of the Grk. N. T., 1972, p. 335, 220)
 - c. Paul thus claimed that God in eternity past foresaw who would trust in Christ, so He chose them to end up in His heavenly presence separate from sin (holy), blameless (having their sinful works burned up at the Judgment (*bema*) Seat of Christ, 1 Corinthians 3:13-15) and ensphered in love. The position we believers currently have in Christ Who is now in heaven (v. 3) will be applied to our experience at the rapture when we are taken to heaven to be in God's presence without sin, without blame and ensphered in love (v. 4)!
 3. To achieve this astounding goal, God from eternity predestined us to the "*huiiothesian*," what Romans 8:23 defines is the redemption of the body at the rapture, Ephesians 1:5. (Ibid., U. B. S. Grk. N. T., p. 664, 550) God has thus planned to use the rapture as the means of transferring us believers from this life to the eternal state so we can experience the fullness of the high position we now positionally have in Christ!
 4. This transition from our current earthly state of sinful weakness to sinless power and glory will bring great praise to the glory of God's unmerited favor toward us in Christ, His Beloved One, Ephesians 1:6 ESV!

Lesson: *God earnestly wants us believers in Christ to realize that He has an astounding goal for us in His unmerited favor toward us, namely, that from eternity past in His foreknowledge of our former, dreadfully fallen state and that we would trust in Christ for salvation from sin, He has positionally blessed us with every spiritual blessing in Christ in this life, and He will apply that position to our experience by means of the rapture to the glory of His unmerited favor to us in His Beloved Son.*

Application: *May we stand in awe of God's astounding heavenly goal for us and praise Him for His great grace toward us. May we then be at great peace in our hearts upon realizing that we are objects of God's great grace.*