

# Doctrines Uses

## Lesson 1

For this lesson, we will focus on Paul's declaration of "*every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places*" coming from the Lord Jesus Christ as it pertains to three types of people who may be in the audience: *the confused*, *the downcast*, and *the unassured*.

- **To the confused**, this verse serves as an introduction specifically for the spiritual blessings outlined in Ephesians 1:4-14 (various books throughout the New Testament highlight spiritual blessings). As we consider these verses in the upcoming studies, you will note that they flow in a continuous fashion just as the original Greek text, which was sung as a hymn. These blessings are not supernatural powers, increased physical vitality, or material gain like false teachers would lead you to believe. In fact, you cannot even perceive them with worldly eyes. Lenses of faith, which become manifest through a relationship with the living Lord and Savior, make it possible to see and partake in these blessings. The triune council composed of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit elects the chosen believers, redeems, seals, and keeps them. Believers received their spiritual blessings by grace during election in eternity past, and they are permanent, eternal privileges (*Rom.8:17; 29*).
- **To the downcast**, this verse is a straightforward reminder of your blessings. It is certain that life will present multiple trials and hardships. Sometimes they will appear to envelop you. During those times, it is especially difficult not to focus on the visible challenges that can easily present as and magnify physical and psychological symptoms. As circumstances literally and figuratively weigh you down, human tendency is to fixate on self. Remaining camped out in this downtrodden state is a dangerous position in which to find oneself. This can easily morph into a cycle of destruction, because relying on our own strength and comforting ourselves, typically leads us to make unhealthy choices and can cause us to succumb to a multitude of temptations. God has provided a means for us to endure and persevere through unfavorable seasons in life. Paul boldly proclaims that every spiritual blessing comes from the heavenly places, so those who are downcast need to be intentional about looking up for victory and comfort (*1 Cor.15:57; 2 Cor.1:4*).
- **To the unassured**, this verse is the promissory note. If you are relying purely on your feelings, you will be deceived. This deception is subtle in its ability to lead one to a false sense of security. You may be doing everything right and credit victories to your maturity and *having arrived*. Suddenly, the "right" wrong trial presents itself or you got too comfortable and let down your guard. Unexpectedly, you fail miserably and wonder, "How did this happen? I thought I was better than that." With a bruised ego and disappointment, you find yourself in a state of doubt. What happens when you fail again or fall into sin? It is a good thing that our assurance does not rest on our ability to maintain holy habits and unwavering obedience to the Father. With an inability to keep the law perfectly and a résumé full of worthless works, we cannot earn our spiritual blessings (*Rom.3:20; Is.64:6*). Without Christ, we would all be hopeless. Knowing that we were purchased by Him and therefore belong to Him, should lead us to repentance (*Acts 17:30*) and the assurance that nothing is able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus (*Rom.8:39*).

## Lesson 2

For this lesson, we will drill down on what predestination and adoption mean with relation to *the lost, the orphaned believers, and the guilty*.

- **To the lost**, these verses are in direct contrast with everything that you have ever thought or tried to reason. Like a clamoring gong in the night, one cannot ignore this truth. In infinity past, God determined who would be part of the elect and receive all the rights of one who belongs to Jesus Christ. The previous enemy of the cross would repent, freely choose to believe, and take on a new identity through a blameless Savior (*2 Cor.5:17; 1 Thess.5:9*). For His own good pleasure, God saves sinners through grace without respect for their title, means, abilities, genealogy, citizenship, flaws, etc. With perfect omniscience, He alone made the decision and continues to set in motion every event to bring His plan to fruition (*Job 23:13*). From your perspective, surely all of this sounds like a foolish child's tale fabricated to instill a false sense of security or to maintain control (*1 Cor.1:18-25*). Perhaps, you are used to relying on your own devices to make it in this world or you have a plan to "do some things first" before you get serious about God or "give Him a try." You might be among those who believe that we are already in Hell, and no place or situation can be worse. Maybe, everything appears to be great and you experience bliss on tap. You feel as if you are already living your best life now. Well, without Christ, you are 100% correct. This temporary stop certainly will be your best life compared to what awaits in eternity.
- **To the orphaned believers**, know that a holy and flawless Father chose to adopt you into His family, instantly claiming you as a child and making you an heir to all His kingdom blessings (*Rom.8:15-17; Gal. 4:7*). Adoption not only comes with blessing, but there is also a responsibility to honor and carry on the family name. In the Old Testament, having an heir to the estate was so serious that a barren female would present female slaves to her husband in order to bear sons (*Gen.16:2*), God Himself elected and adopted Israel into His family (*Deut.14:2*), and the Gentiles were to be made fellow heirs through Christ (*Is.19:16-25*). This union is much stronger than any biological bond. Even a child raised by wicked parents could be adopted and grafted into the family of our merciful God if He so chooses. A blameless Father bestows perfect love upon all heirs of the glorious estate. The family that one is born into does not have any bearing on this legal proceeding, which transpires in the courts of Heaven.
- **To those who are carrying guilt**, this is a statement of pardon and hope. Imagine the freedom of being completely debt-free—absolutely no balance, \$0 owed, your account fully satisfied with no chance of anyone being able to reopen your file. That is exactly what predestination and adoption guarantee. Unlike earthly debt, no amount of spiritual budgeting and sacrifice can assist in relieving the burden and penalty of sin. None of you sought out the remedy for total absolution. Christ called you, and you responded with the faith that He gave. He imputed His righteousness onto you (*Rom.8:30; Gal.1:4*). Now, the enemy is very skilled at whispering in your ear and causing you to doubt yourself. Sometimes others point the finger and accuse you, because of your lapses in judgment or past disobedience/misbehavior. Some of the redeemed still bear the consequences of past sins or lifestyles. By grace, there is forgiveness at the cross even when you are focusing on self or listening to the self-righteous and legalistic, who point their crooked fingers and say, "Look at that sinner. There goes the bad guy..." We all fall, but the sacrificial love of a living God pardons us. Refusing to rest in that assurance is like putting oneself (or others) in the position of the Eternal Judge. When you listen to the voices, essentially you are saying that what He has done is not sufficient and His promises are untrue. Believe God alone who makes it possible for us to be delivered from darkness and made partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light (*Col.1:12-13*).

### Lesson 3

For this lesson, we will focus on two groups: 1) *those who feel like they have gone too far* and 2) *those who believe that salvation is only for one race*.

- **To those who feel like they have gone too far**, Paul declares, *"forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace which He lavished on us."* Not only is His grace sufficient, but it is also abundant. The One who created it all desires to unite all those who love Him (angels in Heaven and the redeemed). How can anyone or anything thwart His blood sealed plan? As part of the redeemed, you are included in that pact. There is a Turkish proverb that reads, *"No matter how far you have gone down the wrong road, turn back."* A mark of belonging to the kingdom is that you are uncomfortable with your sinful condition. The conscience convicts the born-again sinner, and the soul cannot be at peace with the indwelling Spirit who calls you to righteousness. Your Father God is waiting and wanting to lavish you. He promised, *"If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from Heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land"* (2 Chr.7:14).
- **To those who believe that salvation is only for one race**, the Apostle Paul reminds us of *"the mystery of His will."* Salvation is for men from every part of the globe (Acts 10:34-35; Gal.3:8; John 10:16; Rev.14:6). At Pentecost, the Spirit bestowed the gift of tongues so the Gospel could be preached to all who would hear—no one would be missed or left out based on their language or geographical origin (Acts 2:1-4). God has proven Himself to be serious about getting His message to foreign people on numerous occasions in spectacular form. When Jonah rebelled and refused to preach in Nineveh, God sent a fish to swallow him (Jon.1), and he struck Moses' sister, Miriam, with leprosy for racism against her Ethiopian sister-in-law. Faithful preaching in foreign lands led to the martyrdom of several apostles. It would be utterly foolish to believe that God would send them abroad to evangelize and face their death if none of the elect were there. God does all things well. He strategically chose different foreigners to be in the bloodline of Christ, and although He is ethnically a Jew, our Savior is the product of many "mixed" marriages thereby further qualifying Him as the perfect substitute for all men.

## Lesson 4

For this lesson, we will focus on three groups: 1) *the deists, the self-deceived*, and those *in error about what it means to receive the Holy Spirit*.

- **To the deists** who believe in a god who does not personally relate to man, this is a reproof. Through intellect and observing nature, you reason that there is a god who set creation on this planet in order, and then abandoned it, leaving it to its own devices. With this view, your god is like an absent landlord who abstains from interacting with his tenants. There is no accountability, no guidance, no assistance, and no hope in true salvation. Discounting the one true God and looking inward to the natural man for answers to questions which are supernatural in origin is futile. If you continue to rely on your sense of morality and logic to arrive at some heightened state of self-actualization, you will continue being deceived. Believing that men collectively and unselfishly can cooperate with this same mindset to achieve an optimal progressive and peaceful existence is to believe a lie straight from the pit of Hell. The God who created the heavens and the earth (*Gen.1:1*), displays His majesty in creation, yet sinful humans can only receive revelation of the truth through Scripture. Jesus Christ is alive and very much concerned with His creation. He is so concerned with us that He recorded the names of all His children in the book of life and provided the only means of salvation (*Phil.4:3; John 14:6*).
- **To the ones who believe that you and God have an understanding thereby exempting you from the need of a savior or the message of truth**, you are self-deceived. Picture going through life without the ability to perceive pain or sense anything that tastes, smells, sounds, or looks unpleasant. Imagine there was a filter that automatically turned on and muted whatever presented itself to cause you discomfort or anxiety. Reality would be distorted, to say the least. Subsequently, this distortion would severely alter the way you view yourself and others. For starters, while elevating oneself, it would be easy to develop the tendency to be cynical, skeptical, and mistrusting of those poor "lesser" individuals who have too many things wrong with them. Of course, running to church and studying His Word would appear to be a useless means of escape. Since you claim to believe in God and pray, you think that is enough. Your confidence in self leads you to think and say, "God knows my heart. I'm good with God. I'm not religious; I'm spiritual." *"You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder"* (*James 2:19*). Demon faith is just as damning as any other belief system that does not worship the true God. Those who are truly *"sealed with Him in the Holy Spirit of promise"* will produce fruit according to His will. Do not continue to be deceived. What you declare about yourself has no validity (*Matt.7:21-23*). God's "own possessions" do not boast in their attitudes and works. True faith is demonstrated by its response to the Word of God.
- **To those in error about what it means to receive the Holy Spirit**, this verse clearly demonstrates that you were sealed with the Holy Spirit when you listened to the message of truth and believed. False teachers continuously lead people astray by equating receiving the Spirit with some supernatural reception of power or gifts. You may even have gone to a service where you were invited to "receive or witness the Holy Spirit." This can be very confusing when you find yourself in a room that has been worked up into an ecstatic frenzy. All around you, people are speaking in tongues (gibberish), dancing and shouting without purpose, wildly running around, emitting primal grunts or shouts, or being "slain in the Spirit" causing them to fall over or faint. Throughout this buffoonery, they will tell you, "the Spirit is moving mightily in here." If you do not get caught up or feel the Spirit, you are made to feel that something is wrong with you like not having enough faith or knowledge to perceive and receive the Spirit yet. In direct and total contrast, the Bible teaches that the indwelling of the Spirit takes place at the spiritual baptism, the point of salvation (*1 Cor.3:16; 6:19-20; Rom.8:9; Matt.3:11; John 1:33*). God is not a God of confusion, and His house should not be a den of chaos (*1 Cor.14:33*). When the Word is rightly divided, the faith family understands, edifies one another, and glorifies Him accordingly.

## Lesson 5

For this lesson, we will focus on three groups: 1) *Lone Ranger Christians*, 2) *those unconvinced of God's omnipotence*, and 3) *those who do not believe in the deity of Christ*.

*The Lone Ranger* originally started as a radio broadcast in 1933 and was adapted into a television show in 1949. Multiple iterations in the form of cartoons and movies were released over the years. Our hero, the Lone Ranger, was the sole survivor of an ambush who was rescued by Tonto, who later became his trusty sidekick. With amazing talent and prowess, he administered feel-good justice throughout the West. Essentially, he was self-sufficient and practically perfect in every way.

You may feel that the church is full of hypocrites, and you have no desire to surround yourself with those people and their problems. Perhaps, you are comfortable with your ability to read and understand the Bible on your own. Maybe, you exercise your faith from the comfort of your own home by listening to sermons on the radio or watching them on television or the internet. You may tithe electronically or by check. When you interact with others, you treat them respectfully, and you participate in your own volunteer service opportunities. So, why would you need to expel energy to intentionally associate with a bunch of sinners?

- **To you, Lone Ranger Christian**, Paul emphasizes that God's spirit of wisdom, the riches of His inheritance, the hope of His calling, and His power are to be manifested as His children live and love in relation to each other. Without a connection to Christ's church (His body), you can easily customize and personalize your own brand of religion based on personal experiences and thoughts. This lifestyle of unaccountability and relying on oneself to interpret scripture and its practical application in a confusing and unpredictable world is outright sin (*Rom.12:4-5, Acts 20:28-32*). If you profess to love Jesus Christ, you will glorify Him alongside His people in a yet-to-be-glorified church. Forbearance, patience, self-control, self-denial, humble service, bearing others' weaknesses and sorrows, rejoicing with those who rejoice, gently restoring those who have fallen all take place when repentant sinners walk arm in arm by faith.
- **To those unconvinced of God's omnipotence**, this verse is a prayer on your behalf that *"the eyes of your heart may be enlightened."* Think about the last bug or insect that you stepped on or whacked with a shoe. *Splat*—it was easy thanks to a sizeable imbalance of strength. Whether it had to be done or impulsivity, you probably have not hit anything else that hard in a long time, and for that brief moment afterward, you may have felt a great sense of accomplishment or even a surge of confidence and power. All types of living things from animals to microorganisms to plants are capable of taking life. As dramatic as that feat was, it pales in comparison to what God did and continues to do. As the Creator of everything, He has the right and absolute freedom to do whatever He desires to do with His creation, which is consistent with His nature. In accordance with that authority, God has the ability to carry out whatever needs to be done (*Gen.17:1; Jer.32:27*). God is the origin of life and the new birth for believers. He alone can raise the dead to life, both physically and spiritually (*1 Cor.6:14; 2 Cor.5:17; Rom.6:4*). The Father put His power on display when He created the heavens and the earth (*Gen.1*). He merely spoke and instantly our giant sphere (Earth) began falling, spinning, and rotating at inconceivable speeds while hosting amazing forms of life, which are able to exist in spite of and due to various natural phenomena (storms, earthquakes, fires, wind, energy cycles, etc.) that continuously occur (*Ps.33:9*). Whatever God wills cannot be thwarted or stopped, and He acts without tiring (*Job 42:2; Is.40:28*). Whenever we are overwhelmed by weariness, our bodies do not give us an option. They simply shut down to rest. If we grow tired mentally or spiritually, we become distracted, lose focus, or give in to temptation. Giving in to temptation is not in God's nature, and therefore, it can never happen (*James 1:13*). Our minds are only capable of comprehending and processing a finite amount of information. Without a doubt, mankind is bound by limits. Looking through human lenses makes it incomprehensible to fathom how infinite God's power and understanding really are (*Ps.147:5*).
- **To those who do not believe in the deity of Christ**, Paul clearly states Christ's position is *"at His right hand in the heavenly places."* The right hand symbolically represents a place of friendship, honor, confidence, and authority. Physically it is a place that can only be occupied by God. We know that He is a jealous God (*Ex.34:14*) and would not share His throne with anyone. Since eternity past in Heaven, Jesus Christ enjoyed eternal

communion with His Father. He became flesh, dwelt among us, accomplished His will once and for all on Earth, and returned to His rightful place in Heaven (*Rev.3:21*). Christ went to the cross as the only fitting sacrifice for our sins. No animal could atone for—and certainly, a sinful man could not satisfy—the debt. God had to appease Himself, because that is what His holiness required. Believing Christ to be a heretic, the true heretics (the Jewish leaders) ultimately wanted to kill Him for claiming to be God (*John 5:18; 10:30-33; 8:56-59*). God the Father referred to God the Son as “*Oh God*” while speaking about Christ’s eternal reign (*Heb.1:8ff*) and when Christ quoted David from the Psalm 110:1, “*The LORD says to my Lord...*” (*Matt.22:44, Mark 12:36*) He was affirming His deity. The first LORD is used solely for God, while the second Lord refers to man throughout scripture. This language makes absolute sense since the LORD (YHWH) is speaking about the Lord (Jesus Christ, the God-man). The four letters of the Tetragrammaton (YHWH) form the root “to be,” and the meaning of this language can be teased out and translated as “He Who Is,” or “He who brings being into being,” which further substantiates the claim of Christ’s deity since, “*For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him*” (*Col.1:16*).

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