

Ephesians 1

Every Spiritual Blessing

Introduction

Conclusions

Greeting
1:1-2

Our Blessings
in Christ
1:3-14

Thanksgiving
and Prayer
1:15-23



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- Not all manuscripts say that the recipients are "in Ephesus." Most do, some early ones do not.
- Still, no other place name is ever mentioned.
- This is not as personal as some of Paul's letters.
- For example, Paul does not greet people by name.
- All this has led many to believe that the letter was intended from the beginning to be passed around to all the churches in the region.
- Since Ephesus was the leading city, the letter no doubt came to Ephesus first - and thus, the title.

Map

Intro to
the Letter

Intro to
the Chapter



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Let's look at:

- Four Things about Ephesus
- Four Things about Paul's Ministry in Ephesus
- Four Important Topics in This Letter

4 Things about
Ephesus

4 Things about
Paul's Ministry

4 Important
Topics

Four Things About Ephesus

1. It was the largest city in the Roman province of Asia.
2. In its history it had come under Persian, Greek and (Hellenistic) Egyptian rule.
3. It had an enormous temple of Diana (Artemis) and three more temples dedicated to Roman emperors.
4. It was known around the Roman world for occult practices, especially the *Ephesia grammata*, or "Ephesian letters."

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Four Things About Paul's Ministry in Ephesus

1. He spent more than two years there (Acts 19:8-10)
2. During this time "all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks." (Acts 19:10)
3. The believers were so serious that they spontaneously burned their occult literature in public. (Acts 19:19)
4. A large riot started when those who supported the goddess Diana (Artemis) got angry with Paul. (Acts 19:23-41)

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Four Important Topics in This Letter

- 1. What we need to know about Christ** – our Savior and Redeemer.
- 2. What we need to know about our salvation** – how we are made right with God, the forgiveness of our sins, etc.
- 3. What we need to know about spiritual warfare** – an important topic in a city most famous for occult practices.
- 4. What we need to know about the Church** – this new society that God is building in the midst of the world.

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- After starting with a very conventional greeting, the rest of the chapter is entirely made up of two sentences in Paul's original Greek.
- They are 1:3-14 and 1:15-23.
- Paul goes on at length, recounting the blessings we have received in Christ.
- He then gives thanks and prays for his readers, giving us a wonderful example of how we can pray for one another as a church.

Key Verse

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Ephesians 1:3

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places,

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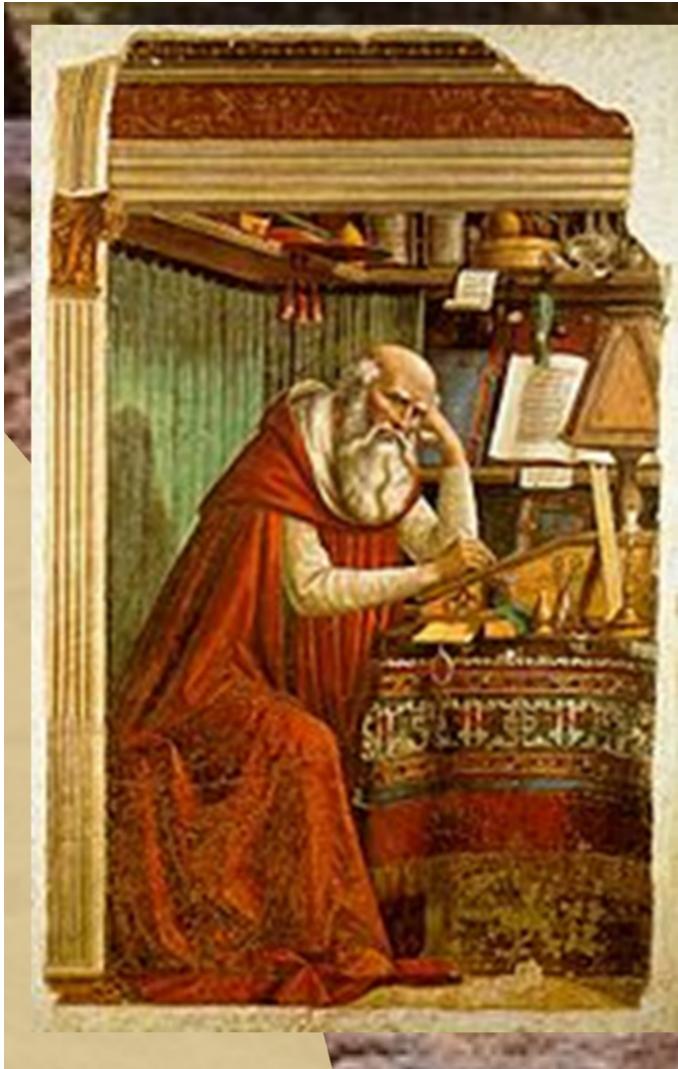
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Greeting 1:1-2

- Paul identifies himself as **an apostle** - one sent out as an official representative.
- He was called to this position **by the will of God**.
- He calls his readers **saints, who are also faithful**. They are people set apart by God to be holy.
- God has designated them for his special, specific purposes.
- Paul greets his readers with **grace** - divine favor - and **peace** - or a general state of well-being that is given by God.
- These come **from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ** who are mentioned together - on the same level.

From
Jerome



The **grace** of the Father lies in his willingness to send the Son for our salvation, while the **peace** of the Son lies in the fact that we are reconciled to the Father through him.

Jerome (347 - 420), Translator of the Latin Vulgate Bible



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Our Blessings in Christ 1:3-14

- This is our first long sentence.
- The whole **Trinity** is at work in this passage.
- The **Father** elects verses 4-6
- The **Son** redeems verses 7-12
- The **Spirit** seals verses 13-14
- And each section ends with “to the praise of his glory.”

Ephesians
3:14-19

The Father

The Son

The Spirit

The Father

- God the Father is the main architect of this entire plan.
- He chose us in Christ (v.4)
- In love he predestined us for adoption (v.5)
- With grace he has blessed us (v.6)
- He is the main actor throughout the rest of this passage as well.

A Note on
Election

A Note on
Adoption

A Note on Election

Election can cause some people massive trouble. Here are a few things to remember:

- 1. It is biblical.** Nobody (say Calvin) just made it up
- 2. It is a reason for holiness**, not an excuse for sin. (v.4)
- 3. It should lead to humility**, not superiority. No one earns it.
- 4. Our concept of it must be totally consistent with putting our faith or trust in Christ** – not in contrast to faith.

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Romans 8:14-16 (ESV)

14 For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. 15 For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!" 16 The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.

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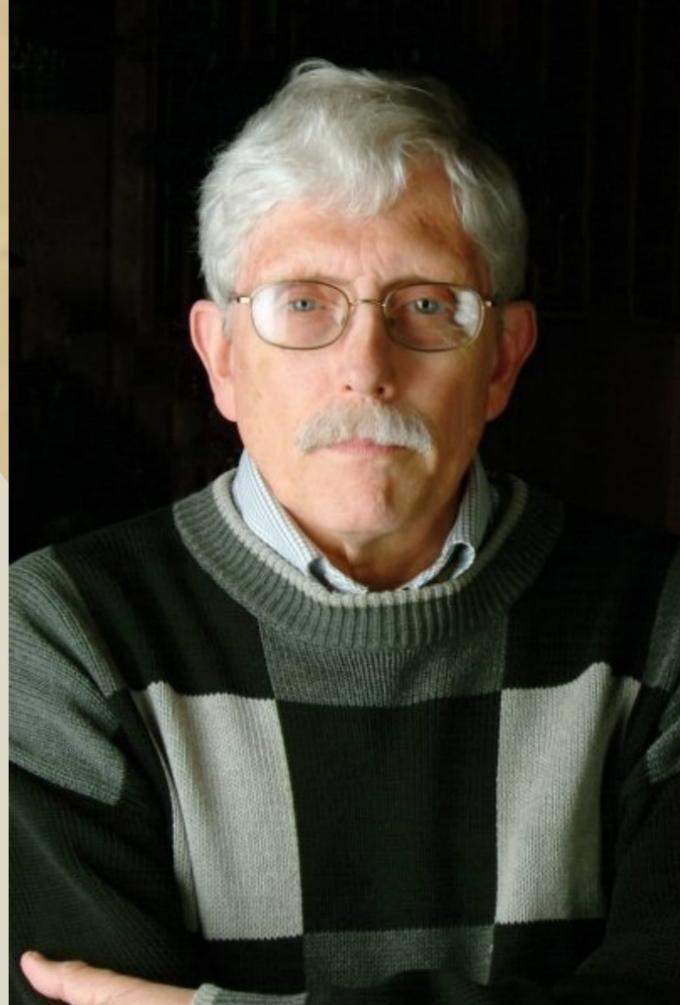
The Spirit

The Son

- **The Son has redeemed us**, meaning he has purchased our freedom by his blood.
- Our trespasses are forgiven **according to the riches of his grace** - according to the size of God's riches, not our own or anyone else's.
- God's plan embraces **the uniting of all things in heaven and things on earth in Christ**.

From Grant Osborne

Revelation
11:15



God's wealth cannot be exhausted, and it is always available to his children. When we get to heaven we will be shocked by how little of the divine largesse we have actually used; we depend on ourselves far more than we should.

Grant R. Osborne (1942 - 2018)
Trinity Evangelical Divinity School

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Revelation 11:15 (ESV)

Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever."

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- We received these blessings “when [we] heard the word of truth, the gospel of [our] salvation and believed in him.”
- It is at this point of faith, we were sealed by the Holy Spirit.
- He came into our lives and regenerated us, gave us new birth as God’s new children.
- His presence in our lives is the guarantee (or “down payment”) that the full inheritance of God’s kingdom shall one day be ours.



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Ephesians 3:14-19 (ESV)

14 For this reason I bow my knees before **the Father**,
15 from whom every family in heaven and on earth is
named, 16 that according to the riches of his glory he
may grant you to be strengthened with power
through **his Spirit** in your inner being, 17 so that
Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that
you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 may have
strength to comprehend with all the saints what is
the breadth and length and height and depth, 19 and
to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge,
that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

From Tony
Evans

All three members of the Godhead are involved in delivering our salvation and securing us in the love of Christ: God the Father, God the Spirit, and God the Son. We are joined together with each member of the Holy Trinity in a relationship of love that is so deep it is beyond anything we can understand.

- in *Theology You Can Count On*



Tony Evans, Bible Teacher
and Commentator

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Thanksgiving and Prayer 1:15-23

Paul now begins his next sentence.

- When we begin the Christian life, our spiritual eyes are opened to new realities.
- Still, we cannot grasp everything at one time.
- The truths we are only now beginning to see are simply too immense to take in all at once.
- That is what makes a prayer like this constantly relevant.

Wisdom and
Revelation

Immeasurable
Power

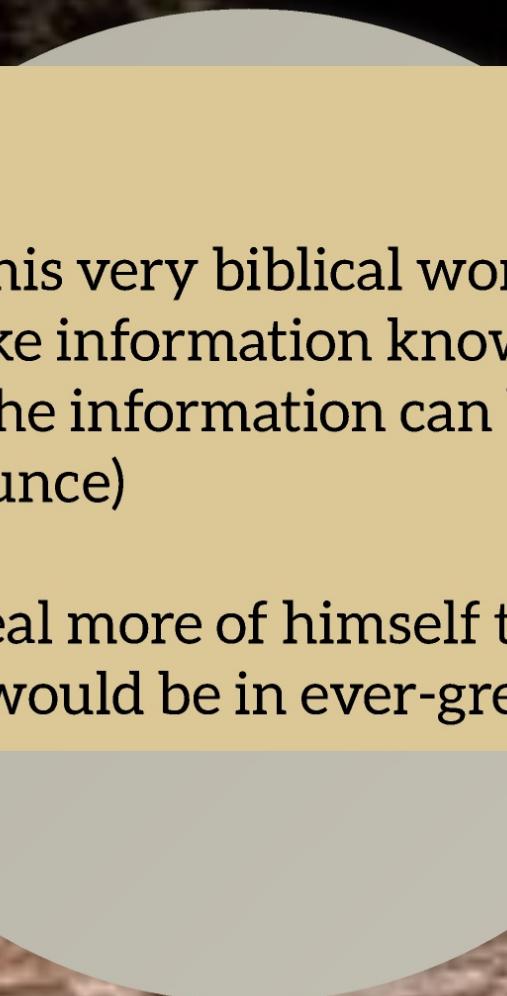
Christ's
Exalted
Place

The Church
as a Body

Wisdom and Revelation

Revelation

- Starting with v.16 Paul gives us a glimpse into his prayer life.
- He is constantly giving thanks for believers.
- His prayer is that God would give them wisdom and revelation (*apocalypsis* - as in the book of *Revelation*).
- We can put this in our homework for this week.
- **Give God thanks for our church every day** and pray that he would "open the eyes of our hearts" with **wisdom, revelation and a deeper knowledge of him.**



Revelation:

The meaning of this very biblical word is *unveiling, disclosure*, "to make information known with an implication that the information can be understood." (Mounce)

If God would reveal more of himself to us, we can only imagine that we would be in ever-greater awe of him.

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Immeasurable Power

Ephesian Magic

- The immeasurable greatness of God's power is at work in the life of each and every believer.
- This is the same power that God exercised in raising Christ from the dead.
- God's power has overcome all the forces of wickedness, all the power of sin and finally the power of death.
- This is the power that is now at work in us.

Ephesian Magic

- Paul's emphasis on the power of God and the exalted place of Jesus Christ in Ephesians was no accident.
- He knew as well as anyone the stranglehold that magic and occult practices had in all of Asia, but specifically in Ephesus.
- We tend to take such topics lightly. No one who originally read Paul's letter would have been tempted to do so.
- Many of them were probably delivered from spiritual oppression and the power of demonic or occult forces.

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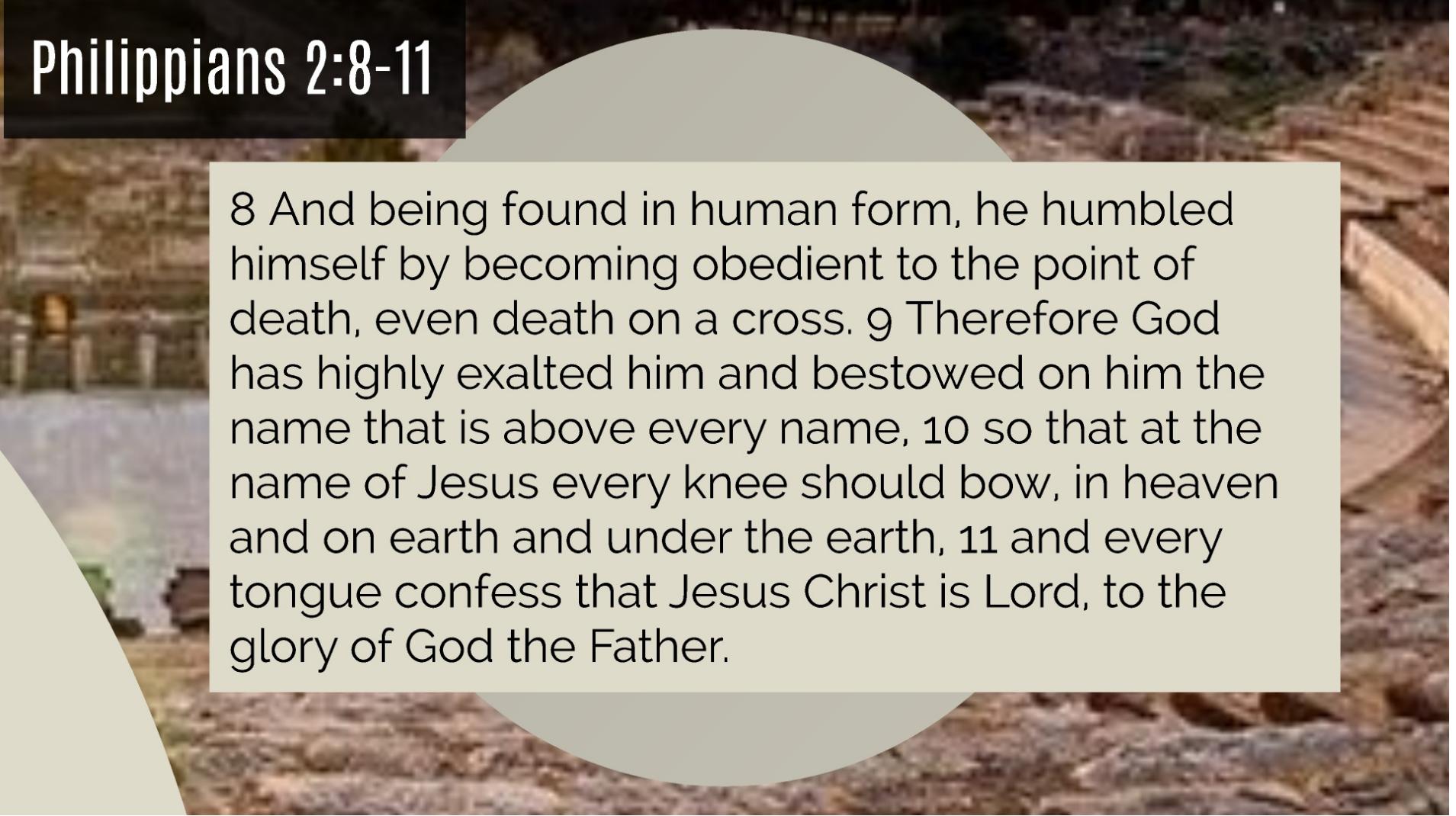
The Church
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Christ's Exalted Place

Philippians
2:8-11

- The vocabulary Paul uses in **v.21** is another reminder that Christ is far more exalted than all the spiritual forces of wickedness.
- We in our secular mindset might at first take these words to mean earthly powers only.
- But compare the words with
Ephesians 6:12 *For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the **rulers**, against the **authorities**, against the cosmic **powers** over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.*

Philippians 2:8-11



8 And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. 9 Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, 10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

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The Church as a Body

- One of Paul's favorite metaphors for the church is the body, of which Christ is the head.
- The head controls the body, and relies on it to express its desires and will.
- Without the head, the body cannot function – it simply dies.
- Without the body to express the thoughts and wishes of the head, no one would ever see or know what they were.
- **God's plan is to use us to reveal and carry out his will.**



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- Yet despite all the evil and occult powers that were present in Asia, Paul reminds us that we have every spiritual blessing in Christ.
- On top of that, he prays for greater wisdom and revelation for the believers, so that they (and we) might better understand the blessings that we have right now.

Key Verse

From Josh
McDowell

A Final
Prayer

Key Verse

Homework

Ephesians 1:3

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places,

Homework

Part 1: Repeat the **spiritual blessings** from **1:3-13** as affirmations about yourself at least daily. (See handout and next slide from Josh McDowell.)

Part 2: Pray **Paul's prayer** for the Ephesians from **1:14-23** for our church at least daily. I will repeat it as a benediction at the close of the service today.

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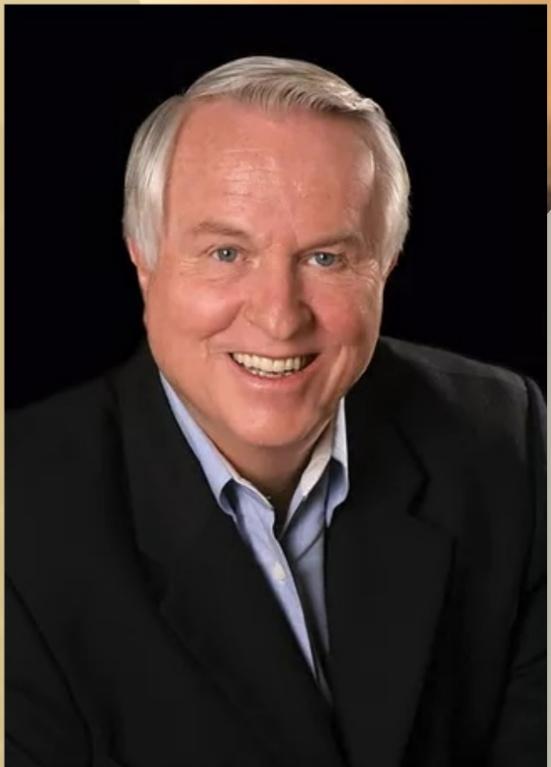
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Josh McDowell, in
*See Yourself as God
Sees You*

- I am blessed in the heavenly realm with every spiritual blessing in Christ. (1:3)
- I was chosen before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in God's sight. (1:4)
- I was predestined to be adopted as his child through Jesus Christ. (1:5)
- I have redemption through his blood. (1:7)
- I am forgiven. (1:7)
- I am sealed in Christ with the Holy Spirit. (1:13)

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A Final Prayer

Dear Father in Heaven,

- We understand from your word that you have blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.
- Help us to more completely see those blessings as we live out our lives for you here on this earth.
- We need greater wisdom and insight. We need you to reveal more of yourself to us, that we might better know you, and better comprehend your will.
- Open the eyes of our hearts that we might better see and better grasp the great power and the exalted place of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

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