

Paul's Letter to the *EPHESIANS*

CHAPTERS 1, 2, 3: *God's Plan for Everyone Who is "In Christ"* (CONCLUDED)

Benefits of Being "In Christ" (1:3 – 3:21) (concluded)

Fullness (3:14-21)

3:14-15 For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom his whole family¹ in heaven and on earth derives its name. [¹*patria*: belongs to or springs from the father] Paul repeated the earlier introduction to his prayer ("For this reason"^{v.1}). At this point, he continued his prayer, following his detour^{v.2-13} to reinforce the issues he had previously discussed^{Ephesians 2:11-22}, on the oneness of Jews and Gentiles who are "in Christ". Paul used the image of kneeling to indicate his spiritual attitude of submission, reverence and passion^{Ezra 9:3-6, Daniel 6:10, Acts 20:36}. When Paul used the phrase "whole family", he was referring to the collection of all genuine believers throughout time: those who were dead ("in heaven") and those alive ("on earth"). Just as an earthly family takes its name from the father, the heavenly family is named after the heavenly Father ("name" may be better described as "identity"^{Romans 8:29, 1 John 4:16-17}). Saints^{Colossians 1:9-12} enter into the family of God^{1 John 3:1-2} by a spiritual "birth"^{John 1:10-13, 3:5-7}.

When praying, the spiritual posture of the Christian's heart is far more important than the posture of his body (e.g., Abraham stood when praying for Sodom^{Genesis 18:22-33}, David sat before the Lord to pray^{1 Chronicles 17:16-27}, Solomon knelt and spread his hands when dedicating the temple^{2 Chronicles 6:12-42}, and Joshua "fell facedown" to pray for Achan's sin^{Joshua 7:6-9}). In the end, "Before [Jesus] every knee will bow; by [Him] every tongue will swear"^{Isaiah 45:23}.

3:16-17a I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell² in your hearts through faith. [²*katoikeo*: live intentionally (lit)] Paul prayed for His followers to obtain God's infinite riches^{Philippians 4:19} in the form of inner strength^{Philippians 4:13, 2 Peter 1:3} through power from being "baptized with the Holy Spirit"^{Matthew 3:11, Acts 1:5,8}. All saints are given the gift of the "Spirit of truth"^{John 14:16-17} (the "Spirit of God"^{Romans 8:9-14}) at the moment of salvation^{Acts 19:4-6, 1 Corinthians 12:13}. Resolute faith is the proof of the continuing trust in the lordship of Christ^{Colossians 1:21-23}.

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Most of the time Paul prayed for the spiritual welfare of others ^{Colossians 1:9-14, 1 Thessalonians 1:2-3}. Moreover, his prayers mainly focused on the spiritual condition of the inner man ^{Philippians 1:9-11}, which doesn't come alive until salvation ^{Ephesians 2:1-7}, as opposed to the needs of the man's outer body ^{Matthew 6:25-34}, which is "wasting away" ^{2 Corinthians 4:16}. Therefore, as Christians grow weaker physically with age, they should be growing stronger spiritually ^{2 Corinthians 4:17-18}.

The Christian's "inner being" can "see" ^{Psalms 119:18}, "hear" ^{Mark 4:9, Revelation 3:6}, "taste" ^{Psalms 34:8}, and "feel" ^{Acts 17:27}; and must also be "fed" ^{Matthew 4:4} and "washed" ^{Ephesians 5:25-27} by the Word, "trained" ^{1 Timothy 4:7-8}, "cleansed" ^{Psalms 51:7}, and "renewed day by day" ^{2 Corinthians 4:16}.

Note another example of the interworking of the Trinity: Father ^{v.14}, Holy Spirit ^{v.16}, Son ^{v.17}.

3:17b-19 And I pray that you, being rooted & established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp ³ how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know ⁴ this love that surpasses knowledge – that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

[³*katalambano*: to seize intentionally (lit), ⁴*ginosko*: to know experientially] Those who have already "received Christ Jesus as Lord" will be "rooted and built up in Him" ^{Colossians 2:6-7}.

Servant love (love for God and for people ^{Matthew 22:37-40}) is the foundation and heart of the Christian life ^{1 Corinthians 13, 1 John 4:7-8, 19-21}. Paul prayed for the Ephesians to have power through the vastness and completeness of God's love ^{John 3:16}, because His love is both granted to ^{Romans 5:5, 1 Thessalonians 4:9} and commanded of ^{John 13:34-35} all Christians. God's gifts are beyond human understanding ^{Philippians 4:4-7}. Paul emphasized to the church at Ephesus about being filled with all three members of the Trinity: the Father ^{v.19}, the Son ^{Ephesians 4:13}, the Holy Spirit ^{Ephesians 5:18}, because being filled in these ways empowers Christians to be as Christ-like as possible ^{Matthew 5:48, 1 Peter 1:15-16}. When people are saved, they are "in Christ" and "have been given fullness in [Him]" ^{Colossians 2:9-10} (i.e., they have immediate access to the fullness of Jesus). However, to obtain practical use of fullness, saints are told not to be full of "wine" (symbolic of world's influences), but to be "filled with the Spirit" ^{Romans 8:6, Ephesians 5:18}. As with so many of God's blessings, a believer must "practice" Christ-like conduct ^{Philippians 4:4-9} in order to gain the fullness (e.g., the peace of God), He wants so much to pour upon them.

The image of being "rooted" indicates an anchor that provides nourishment and stability (i.e., a strong base) for a person. ^{Jeremiah 17:5-8} The word "established" ("grounded") speaks of a person having a sound and very strong foundation. ^{Matthew 7:24-27, 1 Corinthians 3:10-11, 2 Timothy 2:19}

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Ephesians H: Chapters 3b

Obedience is the proof of a deep love for mankind's Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. ^{John 14:15}

It is possible to understand a salvation principle, without personally "grasping" it. ^{Matthew 27:3-5}

The reference to four dimensions (width, length, height, depth) is either Paul's way of using hyperbole to highlight the immensity of God's love for humans ^{Psalms 103:11-12} or a way to include the four physical dimensions mankind can easily comprehend (length, width, height and time).

3:20-21 Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen. When the previous conditions ^{v.16-19} are met, the Lord's power working in and through the saints is unlimited and far beyond human comprehension. Only when the members of His church (His body) attain the fullness of their faith ^{Philippians 1:4-6}, will the glory of Christ Jesus ^{Romans 11:33-36} be fully revealed.

Man often falters, but God "is able" to accomplish all things ^{Romans 16:25, 2 Corinthians 9:8, Jude 1:24}.

This completes the part of Ephesians on Christian doctrine and being "in Christ".

If you are a born-again Christian, then you are **in Christ**, and you are:

Forgiven ^{Ephesians 1:7}, *Doing Everything through Christ who Gives You Strength* ^{Philippians 4:13},
Redeemed from the Hand of the Foe ^{Psalms 107:2}, *An Heir of Eternal Life* ^{1 John 5:11-12},
Led by the Spirit of God ^{Romans 8:13-14}, *Redeemed from the Curse of the Law* ^{Galatians 3:13},
Strong in the Lord and in His Mighty Power ^{Ephesians 6:10}, *A Child of God* ^{Romans 8:16},
Kept in Safety Wherever You Go ^{Psalms 4:8}, *Living by Faith and Not by Sight* ^{2 Corinthians 5:7},
Rescued from the Dominion of Darkness ^{Colossians 1:13}, *Justified by Faith* ^{Romans 5:1},
An Overcomer by the Blood of the Lamb and the Word of Your Testimony ^{Revelation 12:11},
An Heir of God and Co-heir with Christ ^{Romans 8:17}, *An Imitator of God* ^{Ephesians 5:1},
Saved by Grace through Faith ^{Ephesians 2:8-9}, *The Light of the World* ^{Matthew 5:14},
Transformed by the Renewing of Your Mind ^{Romans 12:2}, *A New Creation* ^{2 Corinthians 5:17},
Healed by His Wounds ^{1 Peter 2:24}, *Blessed with Every Spiritual Blessing* ^{Ephesians 1:3},
Heir to the Blessings of Abraham ^{Galatians 3:14}, *More than a Conqueror* ^{Romans 8:37}.