Introduction:

Today we will continue looking at *Introducing Ephesians*.

Things we will look at in this lesson: Praise for Every Spiritual Blessing in Christ.

Praise for Every Spiritual Blessing in Christ:

01. What do some Christians lose sight of in pursuing deeper or higher spiritual experience?

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02. What do all of the abundant blessings of the Christian life come through?

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03. What was the purpose of God choosing believers?

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04. What was God's purpose in adopting believers?

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05. What is the purpose of redeeming/purchasing slaves or prisoners?

06. What is the consequence of redemption?

07. What is God's ultimate purpose?

08. What is God's purpose for including Jews and Gentiles?

09. Where do we get inner assurance that we are heirs with Christ?

Article 1) What it Means to be "In Christ":

Every "faithful" believer (i.e., follower of Christ) has life only "in Christ Jesus."

(1) The terms "in Christ Jesus," "in the Lord," "in him," etc., occur 160 times in Paul's writings (36 times in Ephesians).

(a) "In Christ" means that the believer is now united with Jesus through a personal relationship and lives within the realm of his character, influence and purposes. Union with Christ is the Christian's new environment; everything the believer does is within the context of his or her relationship with Jesus and should reflect his influence and leadership.

(b) "In Christ," his followers are constantly aware of their Lord's presence and companionship. Because this relationship is so deep, Christians' lives are seen not as their own, but as Christ living in them (Galatians 2:20). Paul describes his relationship to Christ in terms of a deeply personal attachment to and reliance on his Lord. Those who have true faith in Christ should consider themselves to be united with him in such a way that they relate to and identify with Jesus in both his death and his resurrection.

(i) In a sense, all Christians have been crucified with Christ on the cross. Their old sinful, rebellious way of life was put to death with Jesus as he took their sin on himself and paid its full penalty through his own death (2 Corinthians 5:21).

(ii) In addition, Christians have been freed from the law's requirement of having to rely on imperfect sacrifices as a way to receive forgiveness and maintain a relationship with God. Christ's perfect and sinless life provided the complete sacrifice for sins once and for all (1 Peter 3:18). Those who accept the forgiveness provided by that sacrifice receive a new life by faith in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17;19). This allows them to fulfill God's highest purpose for their lives.

(2) The Bible contrasts our new life "in Christ" with our old, spiritually dead and unrestored life "in Adam."

(a) The old life is characterized by disobedience, sin (i.e., opposition and defiance toward God), condemnation and death.

(b) Our new life "in Christ" is characterized by salvation, God's love, guidance by God's Spirit, truth and eternal life with God (Romans 5:12–21; 6; 8; 14:17–19; 1 Corinthians 15:21–22; 45–49; Philippians 2:1–5; 4:6–9).