

Ephesians 1:3-2:22

An Expanded Paraphrase

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What a wonderful God is our God,
The Father of Jesus our Lord,
the Messiah.

What wonderful favors He has lavished
upon us —

every advantage in spiritual realms,
every advantage of Heaven itself!

Remember that all He has given us
is ours only by our union with the
Messiah: His gifts are “in the Messiah,”
and we ourselves are “in the Messiah.”
This is God’s chosen channel of blessing.
Look at this list:

1. Before ever He laid the foundations
of the universe, God chose us personally:
but His choice was “in the Messiah.”
That is, He planned that we should
have the status and the character to
stand unashamed in His presence,
and for this purpose He destined us to
be His adopted sons: and the adoption
is made effective through Jesus the
Messiah: that is the way God wished
it. How wonderful is God’s glory!

How wonderful is God’s grace!

2. He has ransomed us from the slavery
in which we lived—or, in other words,
released us from our faults and failings:
but at what a cost! No less a cost than
the blood of the one whom He so dearly
loves. So that once again our blessings
come to us “in the Messiah.” How rich
is God in grace!

3. He has given us the insight and
intelligence to understand the deepest
riddle of the universe, the very secret
of the Creator’s will. This, too, is an
overwhelming generosity on God’s part,
and here, too, it is “in the Messiah”:
for God arranged that the whole of
history should converge on Him. His
plan was no less than this:

that everything in heaven
and everything on earth
should find its focus

and its meaning in the Messiah.

4. In this awesome plan He has given
us a part! He who never fails to
accomplish what He determines to do,
powering and steering everything to
achieve His purpose, has both destined
us and invited us to be the first to have
in us the radiant hope that the Messiah
gives: so that even our lives reflect
the Wonder of His glory!

5. But you, too, are part of this plan:
for you too have heard the great truth
of God, the good news of the rescue
of mankind; you too have accepted it
as true, and put your trust in the
Messiah; and because you too are “in Him,”
you have been given the Holy Spirit as
a seal of membership and a sign of
what is yet to come, a down-payment
on the immense fortune that you will
one day inherit when the whole
ransomed treasure of God is finally restored
to Him.

What wonderful, wonderful glory
is God’s!

That is why I am so thankful for you
all. Whenever I pray I am continually
remembering you and praising God. For
I have heard of the faith that you have
in Jesus the Messiah, and of the love
you show to all His people, and I
recognize this as evidence of His Spirit
at work in you. This is what I constantly
pray for you:

May the God of our Lord, Jesus the
Messiah,

the God who is Father of all,
to whom belongs all glory,
make known to you the depths
of His own personality,
by giving you intelligence to grasp
what can be known,
and revelation to see
what is beyond human knowledge;
by shining His supernatural light
on your mental eyes;
so that you may know the wonderful
future that lies ahead for all who are
invited to join His service,
the fantastic wealth that He owns,
and makes available to His people,
and the overwhelming magnitude
of the power
that He wields on behalf of us
who trust Him —
power that is measured in terms
of that irresistible, immeasurable
energy that brought the Messiah
back from death,
and raised Him to the throne
of the universe,
where He now enjoys an equal
partnership with the Creator Himself,
controlling the forces that
control the world,
exercising the ultimate authority
and making the final decisions
in the development of the universe
and the destinies of men,
bearing a title that is second to none,
in history or in eternity:

and, to crown all,
having “put all things
under His feet”
God has made us Christians the body
of which the Messiah is the head,
so that the God who is everywhere
immanent,
fills all things,
is the reality of all being,
has chosen to make
us His headquarters,
the medium of His revelation,
the body of which He is the Spirit.