

The HEARING OF Faith

LIVING STREAM MINISTRY RADIO NEWSLETTER

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"He therefore who bountifully supplies to you the Spirit . . . does He do it out of the works of the law or out of the hearing of faith?" Galatians 3:5

In

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Dear Life-study Listener,

None of us will soon forget the unprecedented tragedy of September 11. This edition of the *Hearing of Faith* is our first opportunity to respond.

On page two is an excerpt from *Life-study of Lamentations* concerning Jeremiah's word when the capital of Israel was destroyed and their territory occupied. At such a sad time, the prophet acknowledged in prayer, "It is Jehovah's lovingkindness that we are not consumed, / For His compassions do not fail; / They are new every morning; / Great is Your faithfulness. / Jehovah is my portion, says my soul; / Therefore I hope in Him. / Jehovah is good to those who wait on Him, / To the soul that seeks Him." (Lam. 3:22-25). May these words comfort us and strengthen us.

Life-study of Ephesians starts on November 5. We had already planned earlier to write our regular "What Is" column on the meaning of God's blessing, since Ephesians is full of God's spiritual blessings to His people. The timing of this article could not have been better planned as there is such a cry today for God to bless America. We agree with this, and we pray that God will bless America. We hope, however, you tune into *Life-study of Ephesians* to see more specifically what God's thought is concerning His blessing.

During this crucial time, we echo the apostle Paul's exhortation to Timothy that we pray first for our leaders that "we may lead a quiet and tranquil life in all godliness and gravity" (1 Tim. 2:2).

Living Stream Ministry

Life-Study of the Bible

W E L C O M E S

KANSAS CITY, MO
KCWJ 1030 AM
NOON MON-FRI

WHAT IS GOD'S BLESSING?

"God bless America." In these past weeks and months, we've heard, spoken, written, and prayed this well-known phrase so often. As we consider the great tragedy and loss, the upheaval and change, inflicted on this country on September 11, we surely feel the need for God to bless us, both individually and as a people. But we need to ask, in what way does God want to bless us? What

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GOD'S BLESSING

(continued from page 1)

is the significance of God's blessing according to the New Testament?

In the Greek language, the word *blessing* means good speech, fine speaking, good utterance. Whenever we read the words "blessed be" in the Bible, that is God's well speaking of us, His good, fine speaking to us. When God speaks to us, He blesses us. Furthermore, Ephesians 1 tells us specifically what these blessings of God are.

Ephesians 1:3 says, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ." If we read on in chapter one, we find that verses 4-14 speak of these very blessings: God *chose* us in Christ (v.4); He *predestinated* us unto sonship (v. 5); He *redeemed* us through Christ's blood (v.7); He *designated* us as God's inheritance (v. 11); He *sealed* us with the Holy Spirit who is the pledge, a guarantee of God as our inheritance (vv. 13-14)! These things may not fit into our traditional understanding of blessing. However, this is what the New Testament reveals as God's blessing.

According to verse 3, all the blessings in verses 4-14 are spiritual, in the heavenlies, and in Christ. In the Old Testament, God blessed His people, the children of Israel, with many physical and earthly blessings. Today we may ask God to bless us with riches, health, wisdom, or a peaceful living situation, for which Paul told us to pray (1 Tim 2:1-3). We may also think that God's blessing America would mean that we would have a strengthened

economy, security against opposition, and love for our fellow man. These are not bad things, and God may give us these things. However, the New Testament shows us that this is not God's main focus. Today in the New Testament age, God wants to bless us not merely with outward physical blessings. Our Father God wants to bless us with blessings that are in the heavenlies, that is, *heavenly* in nature, and *spiritual*, all of which are *in Christ*. Hallelujah, in eternity He chose us, He predestinated us, He redeemed us, He designated us, He sealed us, and gave us His Spirit as our pledge.

Why does God desire to bless us? God is a God of purpose (v. 9), and

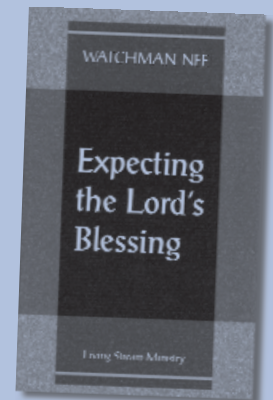
When God blesses us, it is for His praise and His glory.

He blesses us with the purpose of His heart in view. If we read to the end of chapter one, we see the issue of all God's blessings to us is that we become the church, Christ's Body, the fullness of the One who fills all in all (vv. 22-23), for the expression of our Triune God in this universe. This is to the praise of His glory (v. 14). When God blesses us, it is for His praise and His glory. What a mercy that we are truly under God's blessing! May God bless America and the entire earth with these heavenly and spiritual blessings in Christ.

For further reading, please see the footnotes for the above referenced verses in the New Testament Recovery Version, published by Living Stream Ministry.

We at Living Stream Ministry mourn the tragedy of September 11 and pray for the families of all the victims.

BOOKLET BY WATCHMAN NEE



Many times we do not have the capacity to do something. The outward environment is difficult, even impossible. If our eyes are fixed on the circumstances, we will not have any way to deal with them. However, the Lord repeatedly brings us through. These times are the Lord's blessing. When we have blessing, everything goes well and nothing is difficult. Without the Lord's blessing, everything goes wrong and nothing is easy.

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