

Up to the great divorce of Acts 28:25-28, both spiritual and material blessings had to do with the earth, the land that was promised to Abraham and to his descendants. Even the New Jerusalem comes down to the earth to be inhabited by a chosen people (Rev. 21:2). Among those will be Abraham and those who are children of the promise made to Abraham.

But abruptly in Ephesians 1:3 is the announcement that a special chosen people will enjoy spiritual blessings in the heavenlies. This is a part of the great secret that was hid in God from ages and generations (Eph. 3:2-6). This must have been a great surprise to the believers of that time. Not even a hint of such a thing had ever before been uttered.

We wonder what the Ephesians thought of such an announcement! The Gentile believers of that district were told that by faith they had become children of Abraham and so could partake of the promises, but apart from keeping all the law as they were under grace. The Roman church was told that they had partaken of the spiritual blessings of Israel. This church was mainly Gentiles. So all these Gentile believers would go to the synagogues or assemblies every Sabbath (Saturday) and hear Moses and the prophets and all about the material and spiritual blessings that were theirs by virtue of being a wild olive branch grafted into the true olive tree, Israel (Rom. 11:17-24).

Suddenly Israel is cut off. There is no source anymore for blessings for the Gentiles that believe on the God of heaven. And then comes the good news from a Roman prison that by a special revelation to the Apostle Paul, the scene of God's operations has shifted for the time being from the earth to the heavenlies; that there is a purpose in the great plan of redemption that also includes a realm of principalities and powers far above the earth. Had man ever imagined such a thing?

On the earth today are multitudes that have believed according to John 3:16 and have life and the hope of resurrection (John 11:23-25). But that resurrection pertains to the last day and the earth as its sphere of blessing. Many of these may want to know how one can obtain membership in the little band that is blessed with spiritual blessings in the heavenlies (Eph. 1:3). This is something that is beyond the will of man (Eph. 1:4). He cannot join the invisible church (Eph. 1:21-23). The fact that a man may desire this membership shows that he may be in some such relationship in some way but God does the choosing and the adopting of those that belong to the chosen people of today. And that is no different from the case of His chosen people, Israel, of yesterday. As soon as any person takes an interest in these spiritual blessings and wants to know how to obtain them, we feel assured that they have been chosen

from before the overthrow and predestinated to the adoption (Eph. 1:4-5). If they take no interest, then God must have foreknown it and they have not been chosen. Simple, is it not?

We proclaim the good news hoping that it will fall on good ground and produce fruit.