

The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Ephesians

by Oliver B. Greene

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CHAPTER ONE -

OUR STANDING AS BELIEVERS

Ephesians 1:1, 2

Our standing as believers is set forth in the first chapter of Ephesians:

Verse 1: **"Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus."**

There are three things I would like to point out in this verse:

1 - **"Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God."**

There is no place in the Word of GOD where the will of GOD is so exalted as in Ephesians, yet so wondrously linked with GOD's grace. Ephesians is an exposition of the sovereign will of GOD . . . the beginning from which, the end toward which, THE REDEMPTION OF GRACE PROCEEDS. GOD is sovereign - but the sovereignty of GOD does not destroy the free will of individuals, as we will clearly see in our study of Ephesians. Paul was an apostle - not by man, not of man, not because of the will of man - but by the will of GOD. Paul was a chosen vessel to make known the mystery hidden from the foundation of the world, but revealed to us upon whom the ends of the world have come.

Knowing that he was an apostle by the sovereign will of GOD, Paul wanted every believer to know and be assured of the same spiritual truth. Let me repeat: The sovereign will of GOD and the sovereign grace of GOD do not destroy the free will of individuals.

2 - **"To the saints. . ."** Saint is GOD's name for every born again child of GOD. The word **"saint"** means "holy, or set apart"; the term **"saint"** refers to the believer's standing in CHRIST, and is applied to even the most unworthy believer. For example, in I Corinthians 1:2 we find, **"Unto the church of God which is at Corinth . . . called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours."** The words *"to be"* is not in this statement, but simply **"called saints."** Please notice the term saint is used concerning all in **"the church of God which is at Corinth."** If you will read the first and second letters Paul wrote to the Corinthians, you will note that some of these dear people certainly did not act like saints - but in spite of their carnality they were saints because they were born again and were members of the Body of CHRIST. All believers are saints because all believers are **"in Christ."**

3 - "To the faithful in Christ Jesus."

"**Faithful**" is the description of the believer when he lives the kind of life that every saint of GOD should live. If we are what we should be as a believer, we will be faithful in all that we do and say and in all that we are, for CHRIST's sake. When it fully dawns upon us that we are GOD's saints, the fact of sainthood will cause us to want to be faithful servants of the GOD who provided sovereign grace that we as individuals might be born again. We are saints - and we should be faithful because we are in CHRIST JESUS.

In Colossians 1:27 Paul declares, ". . . **Christ in you, the hope of glory.**" Again, "**There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus**" (Romans 8:1).

Again, "**For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God**" (Colossians 3:3).

"**Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature**" (II Corinthians 5:17). Notice in all of these Scriptures we are declared to be "**in Christ**" if we are children of GOD.

Someone may be asking, "How do we get in CHRIST?" Our Textbook gives us the answer:

"**For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit**" (I Corinthians 12:12-13).

We become a member of the Body of CHRIST - bone of His bone, flesh of His flesh (Ephesians 5:30) through the baptism of the HOLY GHOST; and this occurs the instant, the split second, we believe on the Lord JESUS CHRIST as our personal SAVIOUR. JESUS declares, "**Except a man be born of... the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God**" (John 3:5). The spiritual birth through the power of GOD is an imperative if we would enter the kingdom of GOD. We are saints because we are in CHRIST JESUS. All believers should be faithful because we are saints in CHRIST JESUS.

Verse 2: "**Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord JESUS CHRIST.**"

Paul was a Grace preacher. To this chosen vessel of GOD, by the sovereign will of GOD it was revealed that by Grace through Faith, hell-deserving sinners become sons and saints in JESUS CHRIST. Notice Paul says, "**Grace be to you, and peace.**" The HOLY SPIRIT is very careful in the Word of GOD to place every word in its right position. Paul did not say "Peace and grace," because apart from the grace of GOD there is no peace with GOD. When we become the recipients of GOD's grace, then we have peace that passes all understanding; but apart from GOD's grace there is no peace . . . there can be no peace. The statement "**from God our Father, and from the Lord Christ**" is not just a tribute to the deity of the SON who is co-equal with GOD the Father. The statement sets before us the exalted position of JESUS with the Father "**in the heavenly places.**" This position is set forth and unfolded by The HOLY SPIRIT throughout the Ephesian letter.

Please note that Grace and Peace are in CHRIST JESUS. There is no other place to find grace. **"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God . . . And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) FULL OF GRACE and truth"** (John 1:1 and 14).

JESUS was in the beginning with the Father, in the bosom of the Father (John 1:18).

JESUS took a body - He was GOD in flesh (II Corinthians 5:19).

JESUS took a body of flesh for a specific and singular purpose: **"That He by the grace of God should taste death for every man"** (Hebrews 2:9).

Therefore, all spiritual blessings come through the grace of GOD in CHRIST JESUS.

~ end of chapter 1 ~

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