

] According as He Hath Chosen Us [

Ephesians 1:2 – 4

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~ There are many areas of the world tonight that desperately desire peace. They want nothing more than for the fighting and killing to cease, and for peace to become the rule of law. Any decent human being desires order in their generation, law in their nation, and truth in this age. Well, where peace is potentially derived, and how it can last eternally in this lifetime, will be the substances we place into the test tube of life, and pour the acid of the Word of God over it in our next several reports from our Spiritual Safari. This is a dangerous experiment; one that can easily yield false positives – or worse – it can blow up in our faces and do irreparable harm if we do not follow the specific, correct, and extremely rigid protocol in Holy Writ. Fortunately for you, the Holy Spirit of God is our professor in this class, and He will ensure that our findings are obtained properly, and that the results are published correctly, and completely.

As you can see, we are proceeding slowly and cautiously in this Ephesian leg of our expedition through the entire Word of God; it has taken two full reports just to cover the first two verses of the epistle. There are a few areas of the Bible that simply must be given top priority; Genesis, Romans, Leviticus, Acts, Galatians, Ephesians, Deuteronomy, first and second Corinthians, Psalms – okay you got me – the whole thing! However, these particular books have a profound, deep, personal and living message for you and me today. God wants to speak to us right down here on the spiritual sidewalk of life's planet earth; the place we move and have our being. The physical space where we walk in the Spirit of God. The material realm in which we can glorify Him!

See, when God said to Joshua, “.... *Arise, and cross over the River Jordan,*” I know God wasn't talking to me about getting on an airplane, and flying to Israel, and physically crossing the Jordan River. First of all, I wouldn't do that, because I might get shot trying; second, I can't afford to do that if I wanted to – but – when that section of Scripture is interpreted properly, correctly and completely, it has a very significant application for us. Well, as

I said in the Book of Joshua, Ephesians is the Joshua of the New Testament; and we're going to see exactly why as we progress along now....

2 Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

~ Grace is one of those Bible words we just don't hear very often. We're going to speak extensively about the word "*grace*" in Ephesians; but not so much in this report. Grace was a Gentile word; and a Gentile form of greeting in the day and in the region Paul is addressing this writing to. The Greek word for grace is "*charis*" – and they still say it on the streets of Greece to this day. So, that was the word used to say hello to one another in a pagan and secular world. "*Peace*" is the religious aspect of "*grace*" – and "*Shalom*" – peace – is the word you would have heard echoing on the streets of Jerusalem. When Paul placed them together in a single sentence, he lifted both of their meanings up to the inth degree of human understanding.

Of course, "*grace*" is the means by which God saves us; "*by grace are ye saved, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.*" We'll see that in-depth in chapter two of this epistle; but see, one must know the grace of God before they can experience the peace of God. In Paul's epistles, they always come in that order, too, by the way. Today, we hear talk of peace all over the place; but what they mean is a cessation from war in some certain section of the world. Others talk about "*world peace*;" and the real problem is that this world will *NEVER* know the peace of God until it knows the grace of God *FIRST*. That holds true on a personal plane, also. That's why "*grace*" just isn't one of those words that floats around man's conversation freely; although it should. We hear "*love*" and "*peace*" so much anymore that those Bible words don't mean anything to anyone; and they certainly aren't being used in the way they are intended to be used in Scripture.

You and I have peace with God because our sins are forgiven. Even so, our sins cannot be forgiven until we know something about the grace of God. When we experience His grace first, and we are regenerated by the baptism of the Holy Spirit, then we can pray for and receive true peace. All

aspects of our salvation stems from and happens by the redemptive grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. There is no other way, friends. Paul doesn't mention the Holy Spirit because the Holy Spirit was already in Ephesus indwelling believers. Jesus was – and presently is – seated at the right hand of God the Father in Heaven. See, we simply must keep our spiritual geography straight in order to study the Bible properly, correctly and completely. Many people lose their doctrine in the wilderness because they have no earthly idea where Jesus is, where they are going, where He will be arriving geographically on the ground *in that day* —or what He is doing at this moment. Frankly, becoming oriented concerning this is the first step to citing sound doctrine....

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the Heavenlies:

~ Verse three is a deep and meaningful expression; and you'll want to compare your Bible regarding the change I have made in this report. Notice that "*places*" are in italics in your Authorized King James Version – which means that word is not in the better manuscripts. When we see a word appear in italics in the Bible, it means that word was added by King James to fill out a thought in English. So, actually, the most correct form of verse three is "*blessed the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings, in Heavenly, in Christ.*" That is extremely important, although it may seem like I am splitting hairs but, because He has blessed us, we praise Him with our lips. God first blessed us, so our blessing is a declaration of His mercy and goodness; whereas, His blessing upon us are deeds of God Himself to be shared with other believers. He has made us blessed, so we reciprocate by pronouncing Him blessed.

As we examined closely in Psalm one, "*blessed*" means "*happy*" and "*joy!*" God is rejoicing; and the Lord is happy today, friends. He is rejoicing and happy because He has made a way of saving sinners who desire to turn to Him, trust Him, and obey Him. When that genuinely happens, He can and will show mercy and bless us. Honestly, because I am always honest with you readers, I can't think of anything more wonderful than the fact that God has blessed us who obey the commandments of the Lord Jesus Christ

because we love Him. That has a very special and extremely personal meaning for me. We're not talking about something that might become ours when we get to Heaven; we're talking about *right here, right now!* Some people speak of the "*second blessing*" – well, I have had a billion blessings – maybe two billion; I just stopped counting at one billion. The blessings we have in Christ are infinite, my friends.

Now, let's not allow this secret to get around this public forum on which I teach; but, I don't really know exactly where the Heavenlies are. However, I do know that the Lord Jesus is there – wherever *there* is! Either way, the blessing we are talking about are not "*with*" Christ – as some people read it to mean that – they are "*in*" Christ. See, the rewards in Jesus' Hands when He returns are *MORE* blessings to come. Right now, you and I are already seated *IN* Christ Jesus, as we examined very closely in our last report. If you ask most people, "*.... are you going to Heaven?*" – the typical answer is, "*.... well, I hope so.*" Let me say this: if you're going to Heaven, then you're already there *IN* Christ Jesus. That's where we are; regardless of our physical fleshly geographical coordinates on planet earth.

Some people's practice down here isn't good – but they are still saved, and they are in Christ in the Heavenlies. Many people misunderstand this so egregiously that they believe the only time they are seated in the Heavenlies is at church on Sunday morning, or in the mid-week Bible study. Those things are important, and our hearts should be thrilled with the great spiritual truths that result from attending those functions, but, we're seated in the Heavenlies in Christ Jesus, even when we are discouraged, despondent, distressed, discontented, and in deep dire desperation. That's why we are to praise God and bless Him in every situation. See, it's easy to praise God when we have a pocket full of gold, and a new home, and a beautiful wife with loving and obedient children whom we drive around town in a brand-new luxury automobile; but, not so much in the situations I described. Those that all seem to start with the letter "*d!*" Christians become "*Christian Tragedies*" quickly when they are unable to appropriate their blessings in a real-life situational manner.

The children of Israel, in the Book of Joshua, were given the land of Canaan. In the Bible, Canaan does *NOT* represent Heaven – because there were

enemies and battles to be fought – and when we get to Heaven, those won't be things we have to deal with. Down here is where the battle is being fought! Well, God gave them the land, and God said to Joshua, *"every place that your foot shall tread on shall be yours."* Joshua could have replied, *".... Lord, You have already given it to us so why can't we just walk in and take it over?"* However, if God did it that way, then we wouldn't have any idea what a spiritual blessing is. All these things happened unto Israel as examples for our learning. Most people don't stop to think what we actually have in Christ; which takes us right on back to the Christian Tragedy.

I recognize this informational instruction is not easy to process mentally; and it is extremely difficult to fully comprehend all of its ramifications when we do process it. I urge you pray for wisdom, judgment and understanding at this point. Only the blood-tipped ear will hear me now. Our learning will become ten thousand times more difficult before we finish this book of the Bible. Too many people are working for their salvation today; and they are utter failures for the work of the Lord – mainly because they are so busy being carnal that they erroneously conclude they do not need to study the Bible. Others try to work at being good little Christians — and they fall even harder in that ill-strived for capacity.

When we turn to Christ and accept Him as our Savior, we get everything we need: righteousness, justification, sanctification, holiness, redemption, and the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Stop telling others all that nonsense of waiting for the Holy Spirit to bring something special; because when you say that, you call the Lord Jesus Christ accursed, my friends. Those spiritual possessions are yours from the moment you choose to believe God and trust Christ. You can never lose them, either. Most self-professing believers are living like spiritual beggars because of flagrantly false teachings in these areas.

So-called Christians are living off of the wine of this world – and that doesn't necessarily mean literally. They engage in cheap entertainment, indulge in gluttony, and harbor extreme covetousness in their hearts, and they literally throw their spiritual blessings away like garbage as they live like paupers – although they are usually materially wealthy. They become

spiritually frozen in a spiritual doorway of a cheap spiritual hotel during the winter of their spiritual season. It's all carnal. There are a whole lot of people sitting in the front pew of the church every single Sunday who live and die just like that. It's disturbingly tragic. And it's as common as pig-tracks. You're not going to have a single spiritual blessing in this life that doesn't come directly through the Lord Jesus Christ, my friends. I suggest you lay hold of Him in faith and start living as a true child of God should live....

4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:

~ So, our Spiritual Safari ends this leg of our expedition by commencing construction of a safari home; and we'll just take a brief look at one of the strongest passages in the entire Bible. We'll expound on this more than thoroughly in our next report. This part of the construction process for our safari home requires drafting a blueprint; and phase one is where God the Father planned the church. God chose each of us in Christ. Then, He predestinated each of us to the place of royal son-ship. Then, He accepted us in His well-beloved Son.

Our next report is going to be so extremely difficult to understand that some will not be able to build with us any more at this time. Some of you are, literally, going to run for cover with the tests we're going to take in this course of spiritual construction management and engineering. The words I am going to use to teach the next report are so strong I might as well warn everyone now: I don't suggest *ANYONE* read the next report from this so-called Spiritual Safari! But I hope you will. It will all be Biblical – but it will be things I *PROMISE* you that you have never heard before. I am not trying to be extreme or sensational, but we have to see a few things that, frankly, I just don't hear anyone saying – ever. As I said, it will be the single most difficult passage we have come across so far in our expedition through the entire Bible to grasp.

Further, our next report will be utterly repulsive and detestable to the natural man — and even to the average believer. I'm just trying to give you fair warning. At face value, candidly, I do not expect anyone to accept what

I am going to teach next; but my statements will be clear and concise — and the truths they will contain will be irrefutable. We'll become so heated that anything not gold or silver will melt like ice in the Sahara. Notice verse four begins with "*according as....*" — well, that means everything we have thus far discussed will be done according to the Lord's unified purpose and for His good pleasure. This world — and this universe — is, and is going to, work and function in complete subjection to the mighty plan and purpose of the Lord God Almighty; whether you believe it, accept it, understand it, like it — or not ~

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