

EPHESIANS 1:1-2

THAT MIGHT SEEM LIKE A SMALL AMOUNT OF SCRIPTURE TO COVER IN ONE DEVOTIONAL BUT I SEE THAT PAUL PUT A LOT INTO JUST A FEW SCRIPTURES. WE CAN RECEIVE A GREAT AMOUNT OF INSIGHT FROM JUST THESE 2 SCRIPTURES.

PAUL WAS VERY DILIGENT ABOUT GREETING THE SAINTS AT THE BEGINNING AND ENDING OF HIS BOOKS. IN EPHESIANS PAUL BEGINS BY REINFORCING THAT HE IS AN APOSTLE OF JESUS CHRIST. BECAUSE OF WHO PAUL WAS BEFORE HE MET CHRIST I'M SURE THAT HE HAD TO OFTEN EXPLAIN HIS SALVATION EXPERIENCE AND THE FACT THAT HE WAS SPECIFICALLY CHOSEN BY JESUS TO BE AN APOSTLE. HE WANTS PEOPLE TO KNOW THAT NOT ONLY WAS HE AN APOSTLE OF JESUS BUT IN THE NEXT PHRASE HE SAYS "BY THE WILL OF GOD". HE IS REFERRING PEOPLE BACK TO THE FACT THAT HE WAS CHOSEN IN A VERY POWERFUL DEMONSTRATION – READ ACTS 9 TO REMEMBER THE CONVERSION OF PAUL. NOT ONLY WAS HE CHOSEN BY GOD BUT ONE OF THE REASONS WAS TO BRING THE GOSPEL TO THE CHURCH IN EPHESUS.

WE SPECIFICALLY ADDRESSED THIS LETTER TO SAINTS. ALWAYS KEEP IN MIND THAT FOLLOWING ACTS MOST OF THE OTHER BOOKS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT WERE WRITTEN TO ALREADY ESTABLISHED CHURCHES. THIS IS WHY IT IS SO IMPORTANT THAT WE UNDERSTAND THAT SALVATION DISCUSSED IN THE BOOKS (ROMANS - JUDE) WAS WRITTEN TO PEOPLE WHO HAD ALREADY EXPERIENCED SALVATION!! THESE PEOPLE HAD ALREADY EXPERIENCED THE PLAN OF SALVATION AS LAID OUT IN ACTS 2:38 AND SO MANY TIMES WHEN THE WRITERS ARE DISCUSSING SALVATION THEY WON'T RE-SAY THE WHOLE PLAN OF SALVATION. INSTEAD THEY MAY ALLUDE TO A PARTICULAR PART OF SALVATION OR AREA OF SALVATION. FOR EXAMPLE IN ROMANS, PAUL OFTEN TALKS ABOUT GRACE - BUT HE IS NOT DISMISSING THE PLAN OF SALVATION - INSTEAD HE IS JUST FURTHER EXPOUNDING ON A PART OF SALVATION. THE AREA WHERE MANY PEOPLE GET CONFUSED IS WHEN THEY TRY TO TAKE BOOKS WRITTEN TO CHURCHES AND MAKE THEM THE FOUNDATION OF THEIR SALVATION - THESE ARE THE EDIFICATION OF YOUR SALVATION (OR THE FURTHER EXPLANATION OF YOUR SALVATION) BUT THE ACTUAL BLUEPRINTS AND PLAN THAT YOU FOLLOW ARE FOUND IN THE ESTABLISHING OF THE CHURCH IN THE BOOKS OF ACTS. WHEN WE BUILT OUR HOME WE FOLLOWED THE PLAN. BUT NOW THAT WE LIVE

IN OUR HOME IF I WANT TO CHANGE THE WALL COLOR OR HANG A PICTURE I DON'T HAVE TO PULL OUT THE BLUE PRINTS. IF YOU FOLLOW THE PLAN CORRECTLY IN THE BEGINNING THEN YOU CAN CONTINUE TO ADD TO YOUR PLAN WITHOUT HAVING TO GO BACK AND EXPLAIN THE ORIGINAL PLAN OVER AND OVER AGAIN. WE HAVE TO BE CAREFUL THAT WE ALLOW THE EPISTLES OF THE BIBLE TO BE OUR "BIBLE SCHOOL". THIS IS WHERE WE GO TO GROW IN KNOWLEDGE, WISDOM, UNDERSTANDING, RELATIONSHIP AND SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT BUT WE ONLY GO THERE AFTER WE HAVE FOLLOWED THE ORIGINAL BLUE PRINT LAID OUT IN ACTS!

PAUL WAS OFTEN RECOGNIZED IN HIS WRITINGS BY USING THE PHRASE "GRACE BE TO YOU". IN FACT THERE IS SOME DEBATE OVER WHO WROTE THE BOOK OF HEBREWS. BUT CREDIT IS GENERALLY GIVEN TO PAUL FOR THIS BECAUSE OF ROMANS 13:25 AND THE OVERALL WRITING STYLE MATCHING THE OTHER BOOKS THAT WE KNOW HE WROTE. GRACE IS THE UNMERITED FAVOR OF GOD. IN OTHER WORDS YOU DID NOTHING AND CAN DO NOTHING TO MERIT THIS GIFT OF GOD. ALL YOU CAN DO IS RECEIVE THIS GIFT BY FAITH. GRACE IS AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE CHRISTIAN'S LIFE. IT IS IMPORTANT THAT WE ACCEPT THE FAVOR OF GOD - NOT BECAUSE OF WHO WE ARE BUT BECAUSE OF THE FACT THAT WE

MADE US HIS CHILDREN. WHEN WE FOLLOW HIS PLAN - WE BECOME THE CHILDREN OF GOD - AND AS SUCH HE EXTENDS HIS FAVOR (HIS GRACE) TO US. IN FACT THE BIBLE TELLS US THAT WHERE OUR SIN IS GREAT THAT GRACE JUST ABOUND MORE AND MORE. I THINK OF IT LIKE MYSELF AND MY DAUGHTER. I MAY BE DISAPPOINTED IN HER BEHAVIOR OR NOT PLEASED BUT I WILL STILL LOVE, FORGIVE AND GRANT HER FAVOR IN MY LIFE! I DON'T EVER JUST THROW HER AWAY BECAUSE OF MISTAKES. THAT IS HOW GOD FEELS ABOUT US. HE REALIZES THAT WE ARE HIS CHILDREN AND EVEN THOUGH WE ARE NOT PERFECT AND WE MAKE MANY MISTAKES - HE GIVES US THAT "UNMERITED" FAVOR TO OVERCOME OUR ISSUES. PAUL OFTEN REMINDED PEOPLE ABOUT THE GRACE OF GOD. I BELIEVE HE DID THIS BECAUSE HE REALIZED THAT HE, MORE THAN MANY, REALLY WAS GRATEFUL THAT GOD HAD OVERLOOKED HIS PAST. THAT, EVEN THOUGH HE, PAUL, DIDN'T DESERVE TO BE FORGIVEN FOR HOLDING THE COAT OF THOSE THAT STONED STEPHEN AND THE OTHER THINGS THAT HE HAD DONE, HE WAS STILL GRATEFUL THAT GOD HAD SHOWN HIS GRACE AND MERCY TO HIM BY FORGIVING HIM! THIS IS WHERE GOD SHOWS US THAT IT IS NOT IN WHAT WE DO THAT MAKES US WORTHY BUT RATHER IN ACCEPTING HIS GRACE INTO OUR LIVES.

FINALLY PAUL SHARES WHO EXTENDS THIS GRACE INTO OUR LIVES WHEN HE SAYS, "FROM GOD OUR FATHER, AND FROM THE LORD JESUS CHRIST." A BIBLE HISTORY BASIC FACT THAT YOU NEED TO KNOW WHEN READING AND TRYING TO UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE IS THE ITALICS RULE. ANY WORD THAT YOU SEE PRINTED IN THE BIBLE THAT IS ITALICIZED IS A WORD ADDED WHEN THEY MADE THE TRANSLATION INTO ENGLISH DURING THE RULE OF KING JAMES. THE REASON BEHIND THIS WAS WHEN THEY WERE TRANSLATING THE BIBLE (OUR KING JAMES VERSION) FROM THE ORIGINAL LANGUAGE (HEBREW OR ARAMAIC/GREEK) MANY WORDS DID NOT FLOW INTO ENGLISH. BECAUSE OF THIS AN ENGLISH WORD WOULD HAVE TO BE ADDED TO MAKE THE SENTENCE STRUCTURE MORE IN LINE WITH OUR LANGUAGE. BUT TO DENOTE WHERE THEY ADDED A WORD THEY MADE ALL THOSE WORDS ITALICIZED. SO WHEN YOU READ THE BIBLE IF YOU COME ACROSS A WORD THAT IS IN ITALICS OFTEN I WILL RE-READ THE SENTENCE REMOVING THE ITALICIZED WORD TO SEE IF THE MEANING CHANGES AT ALL. IN THIS SCRIPTURE AND THE WORDING THAT PAUL USES THE SECOND FROM CAN ALMOST APPEAR TO MEAN 2 PEOPLE SEND YOU GREETINGS. BUT WHEN YOU READ IT TAKING OUT THE SECOND FROM YOU CAN SEE ANOTHER PICTURE EMERGE. YOU CAN SEE THAT IT IS ONE DEITY WITH TWO ROLES. IT WOULD BE ME WRITING A LETTER TO

MY HUSBAND AND CLOSING IT WITH THIS, "I LOVE YOU, FROM CARLA, YOUR WIFE AND FRIEND." IT WOULDN'T BE FROM 2 DIFFERENT PEOPLE BUT IT WOULD BE EXPRESSING THE MULTIPLE FACETS OF MY RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM. I AM BOTH HIS WIFE AND HIS FRIEND AND AS SUCH I AM TELLING HIM THAT I LOVE HIM FROM BOTH OF THOSE RELATIONSHIPS. WHEN PAUL DEVOTES GOD, THE FATHER, HE DEVOTES THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE CREATOR. YOU CANNOT BE A FATHER UNTIL YOU HAVE A CREATION. ALEXANDER GRAHAM BELL IS KNOWN AS THE "FATHER" OF THE TELEPHONE. BILL GATES IS KNOWN AS THE "FATHER" OF MICROSOFT. GOD IS KNOWN AS OUR FATHER BECAUSE HE IS OUR CREATOR. HE FORMED US FROM THE DUST AND BREATHED LIFE INTO US AND AS SUCH HE IS OUR CREATOR.

WHEN PAUL SPEAKS OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, HE IS DEVOTING THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE MASTER AND REDEEMER. THE WORD LORD MEANS MASTER. IN OTHER WORDS HE PURCHASED US, WE BELONG TO HIM, HE IS NOW OUR MASTER. JESUS WAS HIS NAME AND WE FIND THAT IN MATTHEW 2 BUT THE WORD CHRIST HAS ANOTHER MEANING. WE HAVE SAID IT SO MUCH IN OUR SOCIETY THAT IT HAS LOST IT'S TRUE MEANING, BUT CHRIST DEVOTES REDEEMER. I'M SURE THERE WERE OTHER CHILDREN NAMED JESUS

IN THE BIBLE BUT WHEN YOU ADD THE ADJECTIVE CHRIST BEHIND HIS NAME YOU NOT ONLY EXPLAIN HIS NAME BUT EXACTLY WHO HE IS. THERE ARE OTHER CAITUN'S IN THE WORLD BUT WHEN WE ADD HER FATHER'S NAME BEHIND HER NAME IT EXPLAINS WHO SHE IS. THAT IS WHY THE BIBLE TELLS US THAT TAKE ON THE NAME OF JESUS. TO LET THEM KNOW THAT WE ADOPTED BY HIM AND WE ARE HIS. TO LET THEM KNOW THAT WE CAN CALL HIM ABBA FATHER.

IN THE OLD TESTAMENT WHEN THEY WANTED TO DESCRIBE GOD THEY WOULD USE HIS NAME YHWH (YAHWAH OR JEHOVAH) AND THEN THEY WOULD ADD THE ADJECTIVE BEHIND IT THAT DESCRIBED HIM, IN OTHER WORDS JEHOVAH-JIREH, GOD MY PROVIDER. MANY LANGUAGES BESIDES ENGLISH STILL WORK BASED ON THIS FORMAT. SPANISH SAYS THE NOUN AND THEN THE VERB AND ADJECTIVE. WE NEED TO UNDERSTAND THAT WHEN PAUL SAID JESUS AND THEN CHRIST - HE WAS TELLING THAT THIS JESUS WAS THE MESSIAH. HE WAS GOD MANIFESTED (ROBED) IN FLESH. THIS WAS THE ONE THAT THEY HAD WAITED FOR. HE WAS THE REDEEMER - THE ONE WHO WOULD BUY BACK OR PURCHASE THEIR SIN WITH HIS SINLESS BLOOD.

SO WHEN PAUL ENDS THIS VERSE WITH GOD THE FATHER AND THE LORD JESUS CHRIST - HE IS SIMPLY TELLING THEM GREETINGS FROM THEIR CREATOR AND THEIR REDEEMER, ONE DEITY BUT RELATING TO THEM IN 2 DIFFERENT ROLES OR RELATIONSHIPS.

AS I SAID - JUST 2 VERSES - BUT A LOT SAID IN THEM. I WOULD ENCOURAGE YOU TO READ THROUGH EPHESIANS CHAPTER 1 AS LONG AS WE ARE USING IT AS OUR DAILY DEVOTIONAL. YOU WILL PICK UP NEW THINGS EACH TIME YOU READ THROUGH THE ENTIRE CHAPTER AND YOU WILL HAVE AN UNDERSTANDING OF THIS BOOK THAT YOU MAY NEVER HAVE HAD JUST READING ONLY.