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## To the Saints and Faithful in Christ Jesus

*“Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints who are in Ephesus, and faithful in Christ Jesus: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” Ephesians 1:1-2*

Who are the Saints and the Faithful in Christ? Arend Remmers gives this overview of the Book of Ephesians:

“The City. It was the capital of pro-consular Asia, being about a mile from the

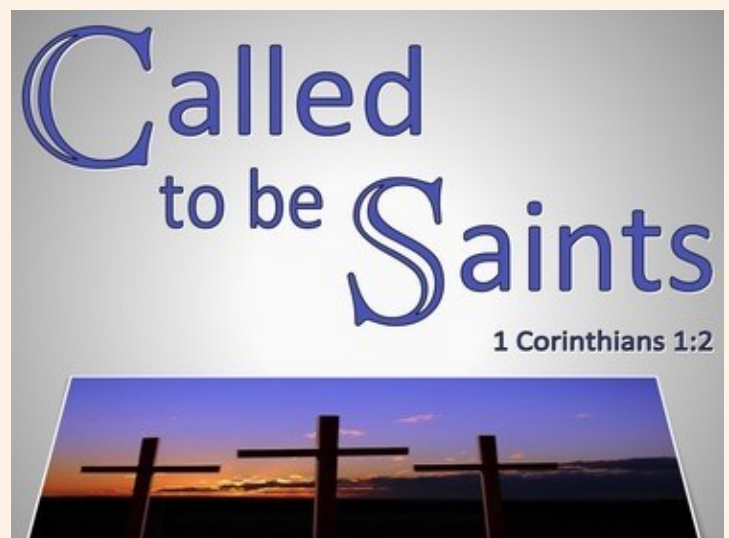
seacoast, and was the great religious, commercial and political center of Asia. It was noteworthy because of two notable structures there. First, the great theatre which had a seating capacity of 50,000 people, and second, the temple of Diana which was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. It was 342 feet long and 164 feet wide, made of shining marble, supported by a forest of columns 56 feet high, and was 220 years in building. This made it the center of the influence of Diana worship, of which we read in Acts 19:23-41. The statue with its many breasts betokened the fertility of nature.

“Next to Rome, Ephesus was the most important city visited by Paul. It has been called the third capital of Christianity, it being the center of work in Asia through which were founded all the churches of Asia, especially the seven churches of Asia to which Jesus sent the messages of Revelations. Jerusalem, the birthplace of power, is the first, and Antioch, the center of mission work, is the second capital.

“Paul's Work at Ephesus. (1) Revisited there on the return from the second missionary journey (Acts 18:18-21). and left with them Aquila and Priscilla. (2) On the third missionary journey he spent about three years there, (Acts 20:31). (3) During this second visit he had such influence as to check the worship of Diana to such an extent as to arouse the opposition of her worshippers and make it necessary for him to depart into Macedonia (Acts 20:1). (4) On the return from the third missionary journey he stopped at Miletus, thirty miles away, and sent for the elders of Ephesus to whom he delivered a farewell address (Acts 20:16-38).

“The Epistle. The contents are much akin to those of Colossians, but also differ greatly from them. (1) In each book half is doctrinal and half practical. (2) Colossians discusses Christhood or Christ the head of the church, while Ephesians discusses church-hood or the church as the body of Christ. (3) In Colossians Christ is "All and in all", in Ephesians the ascended Christ is seen in his church. (4) In Colossians we have Paul in the heated arena of controversy; in Ephesians he is quietly meditating upon a great theme.

“It has been said to contain the profoundest truth revealed to men, and the church at Ephesus was, perhaps, better prepared than any other to be the custodian of such truth, since Paul's long stay there had so well prepared them to hear and understand it. It may have been written as a circular letter to be sent in turn to several churches of which the church at Ephesus was one.



Date. By Paul, probably from Rome, A. D. 62 or 63.”

(<https://www.studyLight.org/commentaries/bcc/ephesians.html>)

To the saints ... and to the faithful—The same persons are referred to by both designations, as the Greek proves: "to those who are saints, and faithful in Christ Jesus." The sanctification by God is here put before man's faith. The twofold aspect of salvation is thus presented, God's grace in the first instance sanctifying us, (that is, setting us apart in His eternal purposes as holy unto Himself); and our faith, by God's gift, laying hold of salvation (2 Th 2:13; 1 Pe 1:2). (Jamieson-Fausset-Brown)

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We read in 2 Thess. 2:13-15, “But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth, to which He called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or our epistle.”

When he says that they are “Chosen for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit” this indicates the process in which the “saint” or “faithful in Christ” is engaged. The idea of a saint being already perfect is foreign to the Scripture. We have been raised to walk in newness of life (Rom. 6), but we are in the process of being sanctified. This process involves believing the truth and being called by the gospel. Paul asks in Rom. 10:14, “How shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?” Even the Apostle Paul had the gospel preached to him by the preacher Ananias.

Peter begins his first epistle, 1 Pet. 1:1-2, “Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To the pilgrims of the

Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace be multiplied.” Note that we are elect by the foreknowledge of God; this election is through the gospel of Jesus Christ. Once again, the sanctification in the Spirit is in view and it leads us to obedience. It is not a perfect obedience yet, but hopefully we are growing in our knowledge and faithfulness and being transformed into the image of Christ.

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MacLaren says in his exposition: “That is Paul’s way of describing a church. There were plenty of very imperfect Christians in the community at Ephesus and in the other Asiatic churches to which this letter went. As we know, there were heretics amongst them, and many others to whom the designation of ‘holy’ seemed inapplicable. But Paul classes them all under one category and describes the whole body of believing people by these two words, which must always go together if either of them is truly applied, ‘saints’ and ‘faithful.’ Now I think that from this simple designation we may gather two or three very obvious indeed, and very familiar and old-fashioned, but also very important, thoughts. We are accustomed to confine the word to persons who tower above their brethren in holiness and manifest godliness and devoutness. The New Testament never does anything like that. Some people fancy that nobody can be a saint unless he wears a special uniform of certain conventional sanctities. The New Testament does not take that point of view at all, but regards all true believers in Jesus Christ as being, therein and thereby, saints. Now, what does it mean by that? The word at bottom simply signifies separation. Whatever is told off from a mass for a specific purpose would be called, if it were a thing, ‘holy.’ “But there is one special kind of separation which makes a person a saint, and that is separation to God, for His uses, in obedience to His commandment, that He may employ the man as He will. So, in the Old Testament the designation ‘holy’ was applied quite as much to the high priest’s mitre or to the

sacrificial vessels of the Temple as it was to the people who used them. It did not imply originally, and in the first place, moral qualities at all, but simply that this person or that thing belonged to God. But then you cannot belong to God unless you are like Him. There can be no consecration to God except the heart is being purified. So the ordinary meaning of holiness, as moral purity and cleanness from sin, necessarily comes from the original meaning, separation and devotion to the service of God.

“Thus we get the whole significance of Christian holiness. We are to belong to God, and to know that we do belong to Him. We are to be separated from the mass of people and things that have no consciousness of ownership and do not yield themselves up to Him for His use. But we cannot belong to Him, and be devoted to His service, unless we are being made day by day pure in heart, and like Him to whom we say that we belong. A human being can only be God’s by the surrender of heart and will, and through the continual appropriation into his own character and life, of righteousness and purity like that which belongs to God. Holiness is God’s stamp upon a man, His ‘mark,’ by which He says-This man belongs to Me. As you write your name in a book, so God writes His name on His property, and the name that He writes is the likeness of His own character.

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“Note, again, that in God’s church there is no aristocracy of sanctity, nor does the name of saint belong only to those who live high above the ordinary tumults of life and the secularities of daily duty. You may be as true a saint in a factory-ay! and a far truer one-than in a hermitage. You do not need to cultivate a mediaeval or Roman Catholic type of ascetic piety in order to be called saints. You do not need to be amongst the select few to whom it is given here upon earth, but not given without their own effort, to rise to the highest summits of holy conformity with the divine will. But down amongst all the troubles and difficulties and engrossing occupations of our secular work, you may be living saintly lives; for the one condition of being holy is that we should

know whose we are and whom we serve, and we can carry the consciousness of belonging to Him into every corner of the poorest, most crowded, and most distracted life, recognizing His presence and seeking to do His will. The saint is the man who says, ‘O Lord, truly I am Thy servant; Thou hast loosed my bonds.’ Because He has loosed my bonds, the bonds that held me to my sins, He has therein fastened me with far more stringent bonds of love to the sweet and free service of His redeeming love. All His children are His saints.

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‘The Saints’ and ‘the faithful’ are not two sets of people, but one.

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“‘The saints’ and ‘the faithful’ are not two sets of people, but one. The Apostle starts, as it were, on the surface, and goes down; takes off the uppermost layer and lets us see what is below it; begins with the flowers or the fruit, and then carries us to the root. The saints are saints because they are first of all faithful. ‘Faithful’ here, of course, does not mean, as it usually does in our ordinary language, ‘true’ and ‘trustworthy,’ ‘reliable’ and ‘keeping our word,’ but it means simply ‘believing’; having faith, not in the sense of fidelity, but in the sense of trust.

“So, then, here is Paul’s notion--and it is not only Paul’s notion, it is God’s truth--that the only way by which a man ever comes to realise that he belongs to God, and to yield himself in glad surrender to His uses, and so to become pure and holy like Him whom He loves and aspires to, is by humble faith in Jesus Christ. If you want to talk in theological terminology, sanctification follows upon faith. It is when we believe and trust in Jesus Christ that all the great motives begin to tell upon life and heart, which deliver us from our selfishness, which bind us to God, which make it a joy to do anything for His service, which kindle in our hearts the flame of fructifying and consecrating and transforming love. Faith, the simple reliance of a desperate and therefore trusting heart upon Jesus Christ for all that it needs, is the foundation of the loftiest elevation and attainment of the Christian character. We begin down there that we may set the shining topstone of ‘Holiness to the Lord’ upon the heaven-pointing summit of our lives.

“Note how here Paul sets forth the object of our

faith and the blessedness of it. I do not think I am forcing too much meaning into his words when I ask you to notice with what distinct emphasis and intentional fulness he employs the double name of our Lord here to describe the object upon which our faith fixes, 'Faithful in Christ Jesus.' We must lay hold of the Manhood, and we must lay hold of the office. We must rest our soul's salvation on Him as our brother, Jesus who was incarnate in sinful flesh for us; and we must also rest it on Him as God's anointed, who came in human flesh to fulfil the divine loving-kindness and purposes, and in that flesh to die. A faith in a Jesus who was not a Christ would not sanctify; a faith in a Christ who is not Jesus would be impalpable and impotent. We must take the two together, believing and feeling that we lay hold upon a loving Man, 'bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh'; and also upon Him who in His very humanity is the Messenger and Angel of God's covenant; the Christ for whom the way has been being prepared from the beginning, and who has come to fulfil all the purposes of the divine heart.

"And notice, too, how there is suggested here also, the blessedness of that faith, inasmuch as it is a faith in Christ. The New Testament speaks in diverse ways about the relation between the believing soul and Jesus Christ. It sometimes speaks of faith as being towards Him, and that suggests the going out of a hand that, as it were, stretches towards what it would lay hold of. It sometimes speaks of faith as being on Him, which

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...note a Christian is all that he is because he is 'in Christ.'

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suggests the idea of a building on its foundation, or a hand leaning on a support. And it sometimes speaks, as here, of faith being 'in Him,' which suggests the folded wings of the dove that has found its nest, the repose of faith, the quiet rest in the Lord, and 'waiting patiently for Him.' Such trust so directed is the one condition of such tranquillity. Then, again, note a Christian is all that he is because he is 'in Christ.' That phrase 'in Him' is in some sense the keynote of this Epistle to the Ephesians. If you will look over the letter, and pick out all the connections in which the expression 'in Him' occurs, I think you will be astonished to see how rich and full are its uses, and how manifold the blessings of which it is the condition. But the use which Paul makes of it here

is just this-everything in our Christian life depends upon our being rooted and grafted in Jesus. Dear brethren, the main weakness, I believe, of what is called Evangelical Christianity has been that it has not always kept true to the proportionate prominence which the New Testament gives to the two thoughts, 'Christ for us,' and 'Christ in us.' For one sermon that you have heard which has dwelt earnestly and believingly on the thought of the indwelling Christ and the Christian indwelling in Him, you have heard a hundred about the Sacrifice on the Cross for sins, and the great atonement that was made by it. Those of you, who have listened to me from Sunday to Sunday, know that I am not to be charged with minimising or neglecting that truth, but I want to lay upon all

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It is possible for us to keep ourselves in the love of God, and in the fellowship of His Son wherever we are, and whatever may lie around us.

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your hearts this earnest conviction, that a gospel which throws into enormous prominence 'Christ for us,' and into very small prominence 'Christ in us,' is lame of one foot, is lopsided, untrue to the symmetry and proportion of the Gospel as it is revealed in the New Testament, and will never avail for the nourishment and maturity of Christian souls. 'Christ for us' by all means, and for evermore, but 'Christ in us,' or else He will not be 'for us.'

"Many of us know that probably the words 'in Ephesus' are not part of the original text of this epistle, which was apparently a circular letter, in which the designation of the various churches to which it was sent was left blank, to be filled in with the name of each little community to which Paul's messenger from Rome carried it. The copy from which our text was taken had probably been delivered at Ephesus; and, at any rate, one of the copies would go there. What was Ephesus? Satan's very headquarters and seat in Asia Minor, a focus of idolatry, superstition, wealth, luxury springing from commerce, and moral corruption. 'Great is Diana of the Ephesians.' The books of Ephesus were a synonym for magical books. Many of us know how rotten to the core the society of that great city was. And there, on the dunghill, was this little garden of fragrant and

flowering plants. They were ‘saints in Christ Jesus,’ though they were ‘saints in Ephesus.’

“Never mind about surroundings. It is possible for us to keep ourselves in the love of God, and in the fellowship of His Son wherever we are, and whatever may lie around us. You and I have too to live in a big, wicked city, and to work out our religion in a society honeycombed with corruption, because of commerce and other influences. Do not let us forget that these people whom Paul called ‘saints’ and ‘faithful’ had a hard fight on their hands just as we do. However, just like them we can enjoy the “grace and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ” even in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation.”

Who are the Saints and Faithful in Christ Jesus? The letter of Second Corinthians was likely written in Macedonia in around 56 A. D. The church at Corinth was one that had experienced many difficulties from factions and misunderstandings regarding the Lord’s Supper to lawsuits and sexual immorality. We have two of his letters to Corinth preserved in the New Testament. There is possibly a third letter that was written between the other

two but has never been found. As he closes what we know as the second letter, Paul gives this charge and greeting:

“Finally, brethren, farewell. Become complete. Be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you. Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the saints greet you. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit *be* with you all. Amen” (2 Cor. 13:11-14).

Paul encourages these brethren to “become complete.” The sanctification of the saints at Corinth was still in progress, so he admonishes them to “be of one mind” and “to live in peace.” He tells them that all the “saints” greet them. These saints would be the faithful in Christ in Macedonia and other places who all, along with Corinth, comprised the Saints and Faithful in Christ Jesus.

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## Reflections of the Psalms: Psalm 1

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Psalm 1 describes the two destinies of mankind. One destiny is to follow the way of wickedness, and the other is to follow the way of God. Life often seems to be so complicated with day-to-day activities, decisions, and experiences. But life really boils down to two, and only two, possible paths - life or death.

In verse 1, the Psalm begins with the word "blessed", and it describes the person that follows the path of righteousness. “How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, nor stand in the path of sinners, nor sit in the seat of scoffers!” For a person that strives to follow God’s will, and lives a life that is God-centered, Psalm 1, in fact the entire Bible, is a message of hope.

Many people, even professing Christians, often question the practicality of the Bible when dealing with issues of modern-day life. Obviously, people

tend to focus on the problems they are facing, but how many problems are never experienced because a person followed the teachings of the Bible? The alcohol induced wreck that never happened, the drug addiction that never occurred, and the marriage that was never destroyed due to an affair because people focused their lives on God given principles. So many pitfalls avoided!

In verse 3, the psalmist described such a person as a tree, “He will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in its season and its leaf does not wither; and in whatever he does, he prospers.” The image is of a tree that is so deeply rooted that storms, drought, and flood do not affect it. This describes a person, whose life is directed by the Word of God. The storms of life will happen, and there are definitely times where the only thing a Christian will have is faith that God will find a solution. And it works! A strong Christians can face, and overcome, terrible trials

that would destroy just about anyone else.

Although Psalm 1 was written long before the coming of Jesus Christ, the same principle is repeated time and again in the New Testament. James wrote, "Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing." (Jas 1:2-4 NASV) Faith must be exercised to become strong. Every person that has participated in a sport has had to train, exercise, and practice. The first few days of training always lead to sore muscles, but each day finds the person stronger. Likewise, the person that "follows the path of righteousness" will develop a faith that is anchored deep in the soil and rock of the Lord.

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The fate of the wicked cannot be more different. "The wicked are not so, but they are like chaff which the wind drives away. Therefore, the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous." The source of evil is, of course, Satan. He controls any person that is in rebellion to God's Will. Many people actually seem to embrace a life of wickedness, but allegiance to Satan will result in a life that becomes increasingly dark and miserable. A sinful life will literally suck the spirit, youth, and vitality out of a person. It is no coincidence that people will look at someone and say, "Boy he looks like he's lived a hard life." The final result will be the loss of everything and then death. Satan shows no loyalty to his "tools".

The psalmist wrote, "They are like chaff which the wind drives away". Too often, the wicked and their activities loom very large in this world. Strength and power seem to rest with those that will not follow the Lord. Yet, how permanent are they? They are "like chaff" - They are like little pieces of trash that are blown about. What is strong or important in the world is not necessarily strong and important to the Lord. By its very nature, wickedness is rotten at the core. The title "Caesar" no longer brings fear. Nazi Germany and

the USSR are subjects for history tests.

Verse 6 concludes with the final scene, "For the Lord knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish." Notice how people, who have lived completely worldly lives, try to avoid any sign of aging. As death approaches, they become increasingly desperate to delay the inevitable. The thought of dying and being forgotten is frightening.

But "the LORD knows the way of the righteous". God remembers His children! The service, the faithfulness, the love, the prayers, and the tears are all remembered. In Christ, a person's life has meaning, and it is not forgotten! But the wicked will perish, and it will be as if they never existed.

So which destiny will it be? Will it be eternal life, or will it be oblivion?

...Jim Shelburn

San Antonio, TX

***"Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it."***

***Jesus, Matt. 6:13-14***



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