

"God's Grace in the Believer's Life"

Part 4

Ephesians 1:8-10

Introduction: In our study of Ephesians we have been looking at who we are in Christ. As Paul penned this letter, he had in mind the fact that he was writing to a church that was more than 90% Gentiles and this was due to an explosion of Gentiles coming to Jesus Christ.

Acts 17:1-4

Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews:

² And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures,

³ Opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ.

⁴ And some of them believed, and consorted with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few.

So, Paul writes to these Gentile believers and it is his desire to ground them and to do so he takes them back to eternity past to show them that before the foundation of the world God predetermined that He would have a Bride for His Son also known as the church. The church would be those who would represent Him to a lost and a dying world.

The book of Ephesians can be divided into 2 main sections. The first 3 chapters deal with theology and in these chapters, Paul explains who these believers were IN CHRIST. The in the last 3 chapters he tells them how to live out the theology of the first 3 chapters.

Now there are 2 main reasons why he presents the theology in these first 3 chapters:

1. That they might live in a way that is honoring to their position IN CHRIST.

Ephesians 4:1

I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,

2. To prevent them from being deceived by false teaching.

Ephesians 4:14-15, 17

14 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:

17 This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind,

God predestined before the foundation of the world that He would have a church and whosoever will can come to Christ. Then in the first 3 chapters of Ephesians Paul is telling us who we are in Christ.

When you repent of your sin and you place your faith in Jesus Christ you are:

1. **Blessed with all spiritual riches in Christ.**

Ephesians 1:3

2. **Made holy and blameless.**

Ephesians 1:4

3. **Placed into God's royal family.**

Ephesians 1:5

4. **Accepted in Christ.**

Ephesians 1:6

5. **Redeemed by His blood.**

Ephesians 1:7

6. **Forgiven of all our sin debt.**

Ephesians 1:7

God predestined before the foundation of the world that all of this would be true of whosoever would come to Jesus Christ. This is all because of His GRACE and it is all out of the RICHES of His GRACE. Those who come to Jesus Christ would be saturated in God's GRACE.

Notice Ephesians 1:7 again.

This is not because we are special or because of any good which we have done. There is no good in us and we have done nothing no good. It is ALL GRACE! That is unmerited favor!

This brings us to where we are today.

7. Blessed with an Eternal Hope.

Notice Ephesians 1:8

The idea here is that, God in His grace hath lavished upon us wisdom and insight. This means that God has given to us spiritual insight and now we are able to understand His Word and His Truth.

1 Corinthians 2:9-14

⁹ *But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.*

¹⁰ **But God hath revealed them unto us** by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.

¹¹ *For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.*

¹² *Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, **but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.***

¹³ *Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.*

¹⁴ **But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.**

We who know Jesus have spiritual insight which the unsaved world does not have for we have the Holy Spirit and the unsaved do not.

2 Corinthians 4:3-4

³ *But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost:*

⁴ *In whom **the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not,** lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.*

Now as we get back to Ephesians, we see that Paul gets more detailed.

Notice Ephesians 1:9

Here we see that God has made known unto us the mystery of His will. The word "MYSTERY" here refers to something which was previously hidden. The MYSTERY is the CHURCH and that Gentiles and Jews are one in Christ.

You see the church was completely unknown in the Old Testament. The teaching of the Old Testament prophets pointed to the Kingdom promised to Israel. Let me show you the words of Daniel's as he interpreted Nebuchadnezzar's dream.

Daniel 2:44

44 And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.

There are many other passages which speak of the Kingdom and it was the Kingdom that the Jews were looking for.

Luke 19:11

11 And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear.

They were looking for the Kingdom and they did not know there would be the CHURCH AGE that would exist first. The CHURCH AGE was hidden. But we who know Jesus Christ understand the CHURCH AGE. It is not a mystery to us for it has been revealed to us.

Ephesians 3:3-6

3 How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words,

4 Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ)

5 Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit;

6 That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:

Notice Ephesians 1:10

The phrase "the dispensation of the fulness of times" is a reference to the Millennial Kingdom of Jesus Christ.

In the last dispensation God will gather together all saints and we will live under the reign of Jesus Christ on this earth. This will all take place at the end of the Tribulation. When we studied the Book of Revelation, we considered some very important Truths concerning Israel.

The promise of a Kingdom and the promise of the earthly return of Jesus Christ was made to the Nation of Israel. This is exactly why Satan will do his best to destroy Israel during the Tribulation.

Revelation 12:7-14

⁷ And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels,

⁸ And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven.

⁹ And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

¹⁰ And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.

¹¹ And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.

¹² Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.

¹³ And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child.

¹⁴ And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.

Satan will not succeed in destroying Israel and so Jesus will return at the end of the Tribulation and He will establish His Kingdom.

Revelation 20:1-4

And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.

² And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years,

³ And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.

⁴ And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

At this time there will be a resurrection. The Old Testament saints will be resurrected and those martyred in the Tribulation will be resurrected. We who make up the CHURCH will already be there for we will return with Jesus. This is the gathering together of all the saints and they will all enter into the KINGDOM. So, there are there are 4 groups who go into the KINGDOM:

1. Old Testament Saints
2. Martyred Tribulation Saints.
3. Living Tribulation Saints
4. Church

Notice Ephesians 1:10 again.

The gathering together also speaks of unity. Let me refresh your memory on some of the conditions of the Kingdom.

Isaiah 11:6-8

⁶ The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them.

⁷ And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

⁸ And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den.

Isaiah 65:19-20, 25

¹⁹ *And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying.*

²⁰ *There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed.*

²⁵ *The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the LORD.*

Conclusion:

After the Kingdom will come the eternal state.

Revelation 21:1-4

And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.

² *And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.*

³ *And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.*

⁴ *And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.*