

Sunday, December 22, 2019—Colossians 1:2 Grace and Peace: God’s Attitude Toward the World Today

### Introduction/Review

- Two weeks ago, before we had a Christmas Program, I preached a message out of Colossians 1:2 titled *Are We Saints?* In doing so we concluded that all members of the body of Christ are “saints” i.e., we are holy (*hagios*) in Christ.
- 61 times the adjective *hagios* is translated as “saints” in the King James Bible. This is the most common adjective used when the Bible is speaking to or about a group of “holy” people. This makes sense given that the based definition of the English word “saints” means “holy.” The *Oxford English Dictionary* gives the following base definition for the adjective “saints:
  - A. adj. = holy adj. and n., in various special applications.
- So, the word “saint” is an adjective used to describe a holy person. Noah Webster’s *American Dictionary of the English Language* defines a “saint” as:
  - “A person sanctified; a holy or godly person;”
- I Corinthians 1:2—according to this verse, all believers at Corinth were “sanctified in Christ Jesus” or *hagiazō*. If so, how are all believers not “saints” (*hagios*) or holy ones in the same verse? If a believer is “sanctified” and set apart unto Christ how are they not a “saint” i.e., holy? This is exactly what the word “saints” means, according to Noah Webster’s *American Dictionary of the English Language* (See above).
- How are all those who have been *hagiazō*(ed) (“sanctified”) not *hagios* or holy i.e., “saints” as a result?

### Colossians 1:2

- **To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse:**
- Paul and Timotheus in verse 1 are writing to the “saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse.” The question arises are the “saints and faithful brethren” two different groups of people?
- Years ago, when the subject of joint heirship was being hotly debate in Grace Circles on Facebook and social media there was a group of people arguing that the “saints and faithful brethren” constituted two different groups.
  - Saints = heirs of God
  - Faithful Brethren = joint-heirs

- More recently, I encountered the notion that the “saints and faithful brethren” are two different groups via the view of sainthood that we investigated in our last study.
  - Saints = Jewish believers
  - Faithful Brethren = Gentile believers
- Both views, while arguing very different things, view the word “and” in the opening phrase of verse 2 a delineating between two different groups of people. In other words, you have group A “and” group B, but they are not the same group. While it is no doubt true that the conjunction “and” if often used in this manner it can also be used to simply provided further elaboration.
- I see no reason in the context of Colossian 1 to view “the saints and faithful brethren” as two different groups. I view Paul’s expression “faithful brethren” as simply providing further elaboration and clarity not demarcating an entirely different group. We will test this understanding as we study the rest of chapter as well as the totality of the book.
- So, how is Paul writing to? He is writing to “the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse” i.e., he is writing to the body of Christ in Colosse.
- **Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.**
- The word rendered “you” in English is a second person plural pronoun. Therefore, Paul greeting of grace and peace extends to everyone i.e., all the “saints” in Colosse. Likewise, Paul includes himself in this statement along with the Colossians via the use pronoun “our.” Paul is declaring grace and peace to the Colossians from the first two members of the Godhead i.e., God the Father and God the Son.
- Paul begins every one of his letters with a similar statement about “grace” and “peace”
  - Romans 1:7
  - I Corinthians 1:3
  - II Corinthians 1:2
  - Galatians 1:3
  - Ephesians 1:2
  - Philippians 1:2
  - I Thessalonians 1:1
  - II Thessalonians 1:2
- In the Pastoral Epistles the word “mercy” is added to the list.
  - I Timothy 1:2
  - II Timothy 2:2

- Titus 1:4
  - Philemon 3
- These words at the beginning of Paul's letters are more than simply his standard greeting. They signify God's attitude toward the world today during the dispensation of grace. They are an official proclamation by the apostle of grace from the rejected Father and His rejected Son.

### *Dispensational Application*

- According to the prophetic time schedule of time past God should have dealt with the world in his wrath.
  - Psalm 2:4-5
  - Psalm 110:1-2—man's declaration of war against God and His Christ was to be—and will be—visited with sever judgment. God will make a counter-declaration of war on a Christ-rejecting world during the 70<sup>th</sup> week of Daniel in the ages to come.
- Acts 2:16-21—Peter declared to Israel that the last days of prophecy had not just arrived but that they had begun. The pouring out of God's Spirit upon them would be followed by the pouring out of judgment upon his enemies.
- Acts 2:32-35—Peter reaches back into Israel's prophetic scriptures (Psalm 110) to call Israel to account for their part in the death of the Messiah. As of Acts 2 Christ had ascended into the heaven (Acts 1) to be seat at the right hand of God "until" the time came to execute Psalm 110:1-2.
- Acts 7:51-56—Stephan saw Christ standing in the heavens getting ready to execute his wrath upon unbelieving Israel along with the Gentiles.
- Just as the cup of Israel's iniquity was full and the stage was set for the judgment of God to fall, God interrupted the prophetic program and reached down in His wondrous grace to save Saul of Tarsus, the leaders of the rebellion against Christ, and sent him forth as a special envoy to all nations, as an apostle of grace, to offer peace to His enemies everywhere through faith in Christ.
- I Timothy 1:11-16
- For most of the past 2,000 years God's attitude toward the world has been grace and peace.
- II Corinthians 6:2—this verse has been true for most of the past 2,000 years. The entire dispensation of grace is day of salvation.
- II Corinthians 5:19—this verse does not mean that everyone is automatically saved or forgiven of all their sins rather it means that God's has temporarily stay the exaction of his wrath against sin.

- Revelation 19:11—the opposite of “grace and peace” is “judgment and war.”

### *Practical Application*

- I Corinthians 1:3—God’s official attitude toward the world today is “grace and peace.”
  - Ephesians 2:8-9—we are saved by grace through faith.
  - Ephesians 3:2—we live during the dispensation of grace.
  - Colossians 2:6—we live and walk by grace. We are not under the law.
- Someone from this assembly recently wrote and stated the following about “grace” and “peace:”
  - Grace—calmly happy or well off. The free unmerited love and favor of God, the spring and source of all benefits man receives from him; Divine influence upon the heart, and it’s reflection in the life, including gratitude; joy, pleasure, thanks (-s,worthy).
    - Also, with the added dimension of unmerited favor, joyfully given. God delights, is joyful in bestowing grace upon us.

Peace—prosperity, one, quietness, rest, + set at one again; a state of quiet or tranquility: freedom from disturbance or agitation: applicable to society to individuals, or to the temper of the mind.

There is a reason Paul starts everyone one of his epistles with a form of “Grace and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ”. Those two words are jammed packed with God’s desire for us in living out our identity in Christ. As the holiday seasons are upon us, so may “Grace and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ”!

- Romans 5:1—if you have trusted the finished work of Christ as the only total and complete payment for your sin then you “have peace” with God the Father through the work of his son the Lord Jesus Christ.
- Romans 4:24—you “received” peace with God freely “by his grace” through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.