

FINAL GREETING AND BENEDICTION; PHIL. 4:21-23 (Ed O'Leary)

INTRODUCTION.

TODAY, ~ WE FINISH UP OUR STUDY OF PAUL'S LETTER TO THE CHURCH IN PHILIPPI.

▶▶ In Phil. ~ 4: ~ 21-23, ~ Paul wraps up his letter with a final greeting and benediction.

▶▶ Now, ~ a couple of things that Paul says here, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ will open the door ~ to a little review on our part ~ of some of what we've discussed in this letter.

↪↪ And review ~ is always good. ~ It helps cement things into our minds.

IN VERSE 21a, ~ PAUL SAYS, ~ "GREET EVERY SAINT IN CHRIST JESUS."

WHEN PAUL USES THE TERM "SAINTS," ~ ¶¶

▶▶ he is not talking about some group of extremely holy people ~ or super spiritual Christians ~ within the congregation.

▶▶ In the NT, ~ all believers in Jesus Christ ~ are referred to ~ as "saints."

▷▷ Paul even referred to the spiritually immature believers as Corinth as saints.

▶▶ Simply put, ~ "saints" ~ is another term for believers.

▷▷ We could paraphrase it as, ~ "Greet every believer in Christ Jesus.

↪↪ Or as, ~ "Greet all God's people in Christ Jesus."

OBSERVE HERE ~ IN VERSE 21a, ~ THAT PAUL SAYS ~ "GREET EVERY SAINT IN Christ Jesus." ¶¶ 1/12

THERE IS REPETITION HERE.

▶▶ Because, ~ to be ~ "in Christ Jesus" ~ is to be ~ a "saint."

▶▶ But as I've said before, ~ repetition is no accident in Scripture.

▷▷ More than likely ~ what Paul is doing here ~ is emphasizing ~ that we are saints ~ only ~ because of Jesus.

↪↪ It is not due to any merit on our part. ~ Neither ~ is it due ~ to who we are.

IT IS ~ SOLELY ~ BECAUSE OF JESUS ~ THAT WE ARE SAINTS.

▶▶ Through the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross, ~ and through nothing else, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ and through nothing that we can do, ~ and not because of who we are.

↪↪ Through the sacrifice of Jesus alone, ~ we have the status of being saints.

▶▶ Paul declares in Col. ~ 1: 21-22.

▷▷ And you, ~ who once were alienated and hostile in mind, ~ doing evil deeds, ~ he ~ has now reconciled ~ in his body of flesh ~ by his death, ~ in order ~ to present you holy and blameless ~ and above reproach ~ before him.

↪↪ Notice, ~ the only thing it says about us here is that, ~ before we were saved, ~ ¶¶

→→ we were separated from God, ~ hostile in mind toward him, ~ and "doing evil deeds."

▶▶ Peter begins his first epistle by telling us ~ that ~ ¶¶

▷▷ we "have been chosen ~ according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, ~ through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, ~ to be obedient to Jesus Christ and sprinkled with his blood."

↪↪ No mention about us ~ being the source of our salvation. ¶¶ 2/12

▶▶ My . . . , ~ we are saints ~ solely ~ because of what Jesus has done.

WE CAN DRAW ~ AT LEAST ~ TWO CONCLUSIONS FROM THIS.

▶▶ 1st, ~ we cannot boast that we are saints, ~ as if we somehow earned ~ or self-achieved ~ this right.

▷▷ Paul says in Rom. ~ 3: ~ 27, ~ "Then what becomes of our boasting? ~ ~ ¶¶

↳↳ It is excluded. ~ By what kind of law? ~ By a law of works? ~ No, ~ but by the law of faith."

▷▷ And as Paul says elsewhere, ~ "Let the one who boasts, ~ boast in the Lord."

▷▷ IOW, ~ "If you want to boast, ~ boast only ~ about the Lord."

▶▶ The 2nd conclusion we can draw from this.

▷▷ When we read ~ or think about ~ the words ~ "saints in Christ Jesus," ~ ¶¶

↳↳ it should, ~ and rightly so, ~ elicit from us ~ great humility on our part ~ ¶¶

→→ and great praise and gratitude for Jesus.

NOW LETS TAKE A LOOK AT VERSE 21b

PAUL SAYS, ~ "THE BROTHERS [AND SISTERS] ~ WHO ARE WITH ME GREET YOU."

▶▶ This reminds us that believers ~ are family. ~ ~ We are part ~ of the family of God.

SPEAKING OF BELIEVERS, ~ PAUL SAYS IN EPH. ~ 2: ~ 19, ~ ¶¶

▶▶ "So then ~ you are no longer strangers and aliens, ~ but you are fellow citizens with the saints ~ and members ~ of the household of God." ¶¶ 3/12

▶▶ The words ~ "strangers" and "aliens" ~ in the Greek text ~ combine to express and emphasize ~ one idea.

▷▷ And that is ~ that we are no longer ~ outsiders.

▶▶ Believers ~ are no longer outsiders. ~~ This is exciting. ~~ Something ~ to be emphasized. ~~ Something ~ to be celebrated.

▶▶ When we were unsaved, ~ we were ~ outside ~ the kingdom of God. ~~ We were ~ excluded ~ from citizenship in heaven.

▷▷ We were ~ separated from Christ. ~~ We did not have a relationship ~ with the one true God.

↪↪ We lived in this world ~ totally without Him. ~~ And we had ~ no hope.

▶▶ And Paul says that that is no longer true. ~~ This ~ has all been reversed. ~~ A radical change has taken place.

▷▷ Believers are no longer outsiders. ~~ We are now insiders, ~ thanks to what Jesus has done.

GOD THE FATHER MADE US CITIZENS OF HEAVEN. ~~ BUT HE DIDN'T STOP THERE.

▶▶ We have also become "members of the household of God."

▷▷ The word translated as "members of the household" means a "member of a family, ~ relative."

↪↪ So we could paraphrase this as "members of God's family."

▶▶ We were outsiders, ~ excluded from the kingdom of heaven.

▷▷ Then through Christ, ~ God made us citizens of His kingdom.

↪↪ But God did not stop with just that radical change. ~~ He also made us part of His family. 📖 4/12

▶▶ No longer outsiders, ~ believers are now insiders, ~ inside the family of God.

▷▷ We are full-fledged members of God's family.

IN 1 JN. ~ 3: ~ 1a, ~ JOHN SAYS, ~ "SEE WHAT KIND OF LOVE THE FATHER HAS GIVEN to us, ~ that we should be called children of God."

▶▶ Or we could read it this way, ⇔⇔ See what glorious, ~ measureless ~ love ~ the Father has given to us, ~ that we should be called children of God."

▶▶ "See" ~ calls upon believers to take a heart-moving look at the glorious, ~ measureless love ~ which gave us membership in God's family.

▷▷ John tells us ~ to take time to contemplate this love ~ and allow its reality ~ to really sink in.

↳↳ He does not want us to just pass over it ~ and take it for granted.

▷▷ This is something awesome that God has done for us ~ and we must never forget it.

↳↳ It should always fill us with gratitude and praise for God.

▶▶ Tense of verb for "has given" ~ declares ~ that this love ~ is a permanent gift.

▷▷ It cannot be earned or purchased ~ but is a gift ~ that will ~ never ~ be withdrawn.

▶▶ Verb "called" ~ indicates ~ that God Himself ~ acted to declare our status as members of His family.

▷▷ So, ~ when we contemplate this ~ glorious, ~ measureless love, ~

↳↳ it also reminds us ~ that we did nothing ~ and could do nothing ~ to earn the right ~ to become children of God.

▷▷ John brings this out in his gospel in ~ 1: ~ 12.

↳↳ "But to all who did receive him ~ [i.e., ~ Jesus], ~ who believed in his name, ~ he gave the right to become children of God." ⇓⇓ 5/12

IN 1 JN. ~ 3: ~ 1b, ~ JOHN ADDS, ~ "AND SO WE ARE."

▶▶ To be called God's children means ~ that we really are indeed ~ God's children.

▷▷ This should give us ~ great encouragement and comfort.

↳↳ Children of the King

▶▶ We are royalty ~ because of what Jesus has done for us. ~~ So hold your head up high.

▶▶ When the Father looks at us, ~ he doesn't see

▶▶ He sees his beloved children. ~~ And what is even more awesome, ~ he sees us clothed in the righteousness of his beloved Son. ~~ He doesn't see

▶▶ *those whom he justified ~ he also glorified.* ~~ Wait, ~ that's past tense. ~~ Yes. ~~ And very important to understand. ~~ In the Father's eyes, ~ we are already glorified. ~~ Tapestry

▶▶ When the Father looks at us, ~ he sees his ~ glorified, ~ beloved children, ~ who are clothed in the righteousness of his beloved Son.

▶▶ Loved ones, ~ ignore ~ what your sin nature, ~ the enemy of our souls, ~ and the world ~ tell us. ~~ We are redeemed children of the sovereign King of the universe.

▶▶ So hold your head up high ~ and give God the glory for adopting us and giving us this status.

IN VERSE 22, ~ BACK TO PHIL. ~ 4, ~ PAUL MAKES REFERENCE TO BELIEVERS THAT were in "Caesar's household."

PAUL WAS ABLE TO REFER TO BELIEVERS IN CAESAR'S HOUSEHOLD ~ 77 11 6/12

▶▶ because God had used the apostle's imprisonment ~ to further the gospel.

▶▶ And that brings us back to something we talked about earlier in Philippians.

▷▷ And it bears revisiting it ~ in order ~ to cement this truth into our hearts and minds.

↳↳ Especially ~ in light of current events.

AND THAT IS, ~ PERSECUTION ACTUALLY SERVES TO ADVANCE THE GOSPEL.

▶▶ That is the exact opposite of the intended effect on the part of our persecutors.

▶▶ Part of the problem for them ~ is they think ~ they're going up against ~ some man-made invention, ~ which is dependent ~ on human beings for its advancement.

▶▶ In reality ~ they're going up against God.

▷▷ The gospel originated with Him, ~ and is dependent on Him for its advancement.

▷▷ Jesus said, ~ "I will build my church, ~ and the gates of hell shall not ~ prevail against it."

▷▷ The gospel, ~ Paul says in Romans, ~ "is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes."

▷▷ In 2 Timothy, ~ Paul says that he was bound, ~ "But the word of God ~ is not bound!"

▶▶ The word of God ~ cannot be chained. ~~~ The Gospel ~ cannot be imprisoned.

▷▷ The world ~ can bury believers. ~~ But they ~ absolutely ~ cannot bury ~ the gospel.

BE ENCOURAGED MY FELLOW BELIEVERS, ~ 77

▶▶ no matter how hostile the culture around us gets, ~ they will not ~ stop ~ the spread of the gospel. 77 7/12

▶▶ And the spread of the Gospel ~ is the most important thing.

▷▷ Not ~ our personal comfort. ⇨⇨ Not ~ our personal rights. ⇨⇨ Not ~our personal ~ anything.

▶▶ Satan and the world ~ will not ~ stop ~ the spread of the gospel.

▷▷ The gospel will continue to spread ~ until the day God brings the curtain down ~ on human history ~ ¶¶

⇨⇨ and Jesus sets up His eternal kingdom.

AS WE NOTED BEFORE, ~ AND AS WE SEE HERE IN PHIL. ~ 4: ~ 22, ~ one area ~ in which the gospel advanced ~ was right in Paul's backyard, ~ so to speak.

▶▶ All the saints greet you, especially those of Caesar's household.

▶▶ Think about it:

▷▷ Paul's imprisonment ~ brought the gospel ~ to the very heart ~ of secular ~ political power ~ in Rome.

▶▶ I've asked this before. ~ Do you think God could do that today?

▷▷ Take the gospel ~ to the very heart ~ of secular P political power ~ in the nations of today?

▶▶ The universe hasn't blown apart, ~ so I think ~ it's safe to assume ~ that Yahweh ~ is still on His throne.

▷▷ So yes, ~ definitely ~ God can take the gospel ~ to the very heart ~ of secular ~ political power ~ in the nations of today.

▶▶ Again, ~ Jesus said, ~ "I will build my church, ~ and the gates of hell shall not ~ prevail against it." ~ Even a citadel of Satan ~ can become ~ a center ~ for the gospel. ¶¶ 8/12

THEN PAUL ENDS HIS LETTER TO THE CHURCH IN PHILIPPI ~ WITH A benediction.

WE'RE GOING TO FOCUS ON JUST ONE TERM HERE.

▶▶ And you can explore the rest of the benediction in your personal Bible study.

▶▶ The term I want to have us focus on is ~ "Lord," ~ in the phrase, ~ "the Lord Jesus Christ."

THIS REMINDS US ~ THAT JESUS ~ AND NO ONE ELSE, ~ IS LORD.

▶▶ And this, ~ as well, ~ brings us back to something we talked about earlier in Philippians.

▷▷ And this also ~ bears revisiting ~ in order ~ to cement this truth into our hearts and minds.

↳↳ Again, ~ especially ~ in light of current events.

▶▶ Recall ~ Phil. ~ 2: ~ 9. ~~~ God the Father ~ "has highly exalted [Jesus] and bestowed on him the name that is above every name."

▷▷ As we said then, ~ "highly exalted" and "the name that is above every name," ~ ¶¶

↳↳ combine ~ to put emphasis ~ on Jesus' ~ absolute sovereignty.

↳↳ There is absolutely no one above Jesus in ~ any area, ~ any characteristic, ~ or any anything!

▶▶ Jesus declared this to be the case ~ when he gave us the great commission.

▷▷ Matt. ~ 28: ~ 18, ~ "And Jesus came and said to them, ~ 'All authority ~ in heaven and on earth ~ has been given to me.'"

↳↳ Note the comprehensive nature of this.

→→ All authority. ~ ~ Everywhere ~ throughout the universe. ¶¶ 9/12

▶▶ Nothing ~ and ~ no one ~ is outside ~ of Jesus' sovereign control.

▷▷ As I've said before, ~ no plunging stock market, ~ terrorist attack, ~ troubled Middle East, ~ ¶¶

↳↳ or presidential election ~ threatens His control ~ or hinders it ~ in the least.

▶▶ He is infinitely ~ superior to ~ and sovereign over ~ all ~ human governments.

▷▷ Pilate ⇨⇨ Ps. 2

▶▶ There will never be a time ~ when any human government, ~ or any human or human group for that matter, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ will in any way ~ threaten ~ or rival ~ the absolute supremacy of Jesus.

▶▶ In Ephesians, ~ Paul makes the point ~ that Jesus ~ is infinitely superior ~

▷▷ to Satan and all of his fellow fallen angels, ~ and will be forever.

↳↳ Paul assured us, ~ there in Ephesians, ~ that ~ ¶¶

→→ there will never be a time ~ when any demonic being, ~ Satan or otherwise, ~ ¶¶

↳↳ will in any way ~ threaten ~ or rival ~ the absolute supremacy of Jesus.

▶▶ Jesus ~ has supreme authority ~ throughout the universe. ~ He is sovereign ~ over all of history ~ and all of life.

▷▷ Nothing, ~ absolutely nothing, ~ is out of His control.

▶▶ And once again, ~ think about this ~ as we ponder these things ~ my brothers and sisters in Christ.

▷▷ The way we respond to current events ~ speaks volumes ~ about our belief ~ in the sovereignty of Jesus. ¶¶ 10/12

AND FROM THIS FACT, ~ OF JESUS' ABSOLUTE SOVEREIGNTY, ~ ¶¶

▶▶ we can zoom out ~ and rest confidently ~ and be encouraged ~ that God's eternal plan ~ will come to fruition, ~ no matter what ~ Satan and this evil world do.

▶▶ The scene depicted in ~ Rev. ~ 11: ~ 15 ~ will come about.

▷▷ "Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, ~ and there were loud voices in heaven, ~ saying, ~ 'The kingdom of the world ~ has become ~ the kingdom of our Lord and ~ of his Christ, ~ and he ~ shall reign forever and ever.'"

▶▶ God will ~ bring His eternal plan ~ to completion.

▶▶ When we view what's happening ~ in this country and the world today, ~ know this: ~ ¶¶

▷▷ things ~ are not spinning out of control, ~ evil and chaos ~ will not be triumphant.

▶▶ When we view current events, ~ there is no need to become ~ fearful, ~ depressed, ~ or angry.

▷▷ Rather, ~ should we not ~ have a similar response ~ to God's initial response ~ to puny man's ~ puny efforts ~ to overthrow Him?

→→ "He who sits in the heavens laughs."

▶▶ My fellow believers, ~ no matter what ~ Satan and this evil world do, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ "the day of the Lord ~ will come like a thief, ~ and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, ~ ¶¶

→→ and the heavenly bodies ~ will be burned up and dissolved, ~ and the earth and the works that are done on it ~ will be exposed."

→→ And there will be ~ "new heavens and a new earth ~ in which righteousness dwells." ¶¶ 11/12

CONCLUSION.

MY BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN CHRIST, ~ LET THESE TRUTHS ABOUT THE ABSOLUTE sovereignty of Jesus ~ sink deeply into your hearts and minds.

▶▶ May they encourage you ~ and strengthen you ~ to face the future ~ fearlessly.

LET'S PRAY 12/12