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# God's New Society, Ephesians 1:1-2

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## Introduction

- Throughout history, men have envisioned a new society that would be brought about by the wisdom of humanism and the power of the state.
  - Lenin: "Socialism is the abolition of all... real relations, the abolition of man's slavery to other men and to nature. It is the new society where man will be free and where, as a consequence, the state will have withered away."<sup>1</sup>
  - Chavez: "We cannot predict the new society that will emerge from these struggles. But I am certain that it will be less cruel, less exploitative and more just."<sup>2</sup>
    - In both cases, their attempts led to more suffering and injustice.
- However, two-thousand years ago, Paul wrote this letter to the Ephesians that declares and lays out a new society. This one is founded by God's wisdom and power.
  - Their period was one of social disintegration. So, his letter was very relevant to their situation. In our time of social breakdown, it is apparently still crucial.

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## Set Apart

- **Point:** We have been set apart by God for his purposes.
  - Paul describes himself and the church as set apart. Notice what is different and what is the same.
    - They have different offices. Few apostles but all saints.
      - John Calvin: "All believers are saints, and every saint is a believer."<sup>3</sup>
    - Yet, they are all set apart *by the will of God*.
- You didn't set yourself apart.

- Now you must obey God in your walk to be consistent with him having set you apart.

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## In Christ

- **Point:** We have been united with Christ though we still live in the world.
  - What does this mean?
    - We are defined and shaped by Christ.
    - We identify with one another in Christ.

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## In Grace and Peace

- **Point:** We have been brought into a state of grace and peace with God.
  - How? Through the work of Christ alone.
- Our job is to extend God's new society of grace and peace.
  - Where do we see God's new society today?
    - In the church and our households.

## End Notes

<sup>1</sup> Vladimir Lenin, "The Tasks of the Proletariat in Our Revolution," March 1917.

<sup>2</sup> Hugo Chávez, Speech to the United Nations, September 20, 2006.

<sup>3</sup> Calvin, Commentary on Ephesians quoted in *Reformation Commentary on Scripture: Galatians, Ephesians*, Vol. 10, ed. Gerald L. Bray, Timothy George, and Scott M. Manetsch (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2011), 236.