



Behold  he Lamb
Publications

The Grace of our God



by Leroy Surface

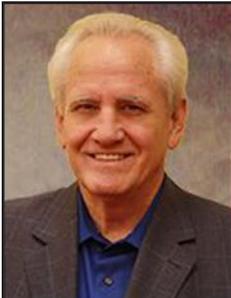
Isaiah 55:3: *“Incline your ear; and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live.”*

John 8:43: *“Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word.”*

Romans 10:17: *“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”*

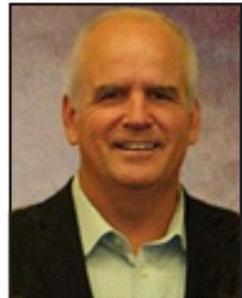
“I’ve never heard this message before!” This is the most common comment we receive from those who first hear the gospel message we preach. That is sad, because we do not preach a new message, but the same gospel Paul, John, and the other apostles preached. A few become very angry because we do not preach the traditions, and some search the scriptures diligently to prove us wrong. Most often those who sincerely search will come back rejoicing that the message is not only correct according to the scriptures (KJV), but that *“It works! It took the filthiness of sin out of my heart when I believed it.”*

Almost thirty years ago, I began a desperate search for *“the answer for the sin problem in the heart of man.”* Amazingly, when God began to teach me *“the truth that makes the believer free”* John 8:32, I tried to prove that what I was seeing was wrong. Every search of the



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scriptures, however, only proved to me that the *“truth of the gospel”* Romans 1:16 will make everyone who believes it *“free from sin”* Romans 6:22. I had been afflicted with filthy dreams and imaginations, but when *“the light of the glorious gospel of Christ shown into my heart”* II Corinthians 4:4, the filthiness *“turned off”* like



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you would turn off a water faucet, and the *“filth of sin”* was gone. We ask only that you *“listen”* as you read these messages. We have nothing to join and will never, ever, ask anything more of you than simply *“listen,”* because, as God Himself has said, *“hear, and your soul shall live.”*

“The Grace of Our God”

Message by: Leroy Surface

Part I: “Merciful and Gracious God”

God has forever been a merciful and gracious God. He has always forgiven and even pardoned everyone who would turn from their “wicked ways” to trust in Him.

Exodus 34:6-7: *“The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation.”*

What’s in a name? Without involving myself in the unending argument about the proper pronunciation of the “*name of God*,” I will in this message seek to show the several different attributes of God that are found in His great name. Many years ago, I met a man who insisted that if I did not address God by His “*proper name*,” my prayers could not be answered. I knew this was ridiculous, because of the innumerable times God had answered my prayers, but I responded that I did “*address God*” in exactly the way He instructed me in the scriptures. Being “*born again*,” I simply call Him “*Father*” Matthew 6:9, because I am one of the “*many brethren*” Romans 8:29 of Jesus Christ. Never in my lifetime have I referred to my natural parents by their given names. They were always “*Daddy*” and “*Mama*,” which was very precious to me. Since the time I was “*born again*” at the age of 18 years, God has been my “*Father*,” and I have been His son. It took some time before I understood the intimacy of such a relationship with God, but I have found it to be exactly as He promised in the prophecy of Isaiah; “*Then shalt thou call, and the LORD shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am*” Isaiah 58:9.

In the New Testament, the Greek word for “name” is “*onoma*,” which means “*authority and character*.” In the Old Testament, the Hebrew word “*shem*,” which was translated as “name,” implies “*honor, authority, and character*.” When God declared His great name to Moses, it was not to tell the secret of “YHVH” (the unpronounced name of God) to the world, but to tell Moses who and what God is. These two verses tell us more of what we need to understand about God than I suppose any other two verses. Moses had besought God to “*Shew me thy glory*” Exodus 33:18. God responded to Moses, “*I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee*” verse 19. The next day, Moses went up into the mountain to meet with God exactly as God had said. The events that followed filled forty days and nights in the presence of God for Moses. It was such a miraculous event that Moses had no need for either bread or water during his time with God Exodus 34:28. When he came down from the mountain, his face was shining with the glory of God to the extent the people were afraid to come near him Exodus 34:30. He had seen “*all the goodness of God*,” lived in the “*presence of God*,” and heard from the mouth of God Himself His wonderful name and “*who He is*.”

Speaking through the prophet Malachi, God said to Israel, “*For (because) I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed*” Malachi 3:6. In this instance, God was reminding them of His “*longsuffering*,” which would certainly come to an end if they did not “*return to Him*” verse 7. In the first two verses of the fourth chapter of Malachi God tells what he would do for both the wicked and the righteous when His longsuffering came to its end. To the wicked, He says, “*...the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up...*” Malachi 4:1. To the righteous, He speaks of that same day, “*...unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall*” Malachi 4:2.

God never changes. He is the same today as He was with Abraham and Moses. He is forever, “*merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth*.” He has always forgiven

“iniquity, transgression, and sin,” but He has never *“cleared the guilty.”* It was true in the day God declared His great name to Moses, and it is just as true today. Verses six and seven of the thirty-fourth chapter of Deuteronomy define for all time, from the beginning of this present evil world until the end of the same, who God is, and how He responds to fallen humanity according to their response to Him. As we examine these two verses, let us keep in mind that God is still the same. He has not changed, and He never will.

“...merciful...” The first adjective to describe God is *“merciful.”* Our God is a merciful God, which is better understood as *“compassionate.”* In order to clearly define what it means to be merciful, however, we need to *“see Jesus”* Hebrews 2:9. A blind beggar named Bartimaeus heard that Jesus of Nazareth would pass by where he lay daily, begging by the wayside. He had heard wonderful things about Jesus, and as He passed by, Bartimaeus cried aloud, *“Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me”* Mark 10:47. In answer to his cry for *“mercy,”* Jesus healed Bartimaeus and gave him his sight verse 52. There were ten men with leprosy in one village who came to Jesus saying, *“Jesus, Master, have mercy on us”* Luke 1:13. Again, Jesus responded by cleansing them from their leprosy. A man brought his son to Jesus, saying, *“Lord, have mercy on my son: for he is lunatic”* Matthew 17:15. Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit from the child and he was *“cured from that very hour”* verse 18. Mercy, to each of these who cried for mercy, was to do for them what they could not do for themselves. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is *“merciful.”*

It is easy to have a wrong idea about mercy. Sometimes a bully on the playground will wrestle other children to the ground and twist their arm until they *“cry for mercy.”* That is the wrong image of mercy, and it is never what God does. God is not a *“bully”* because a *“bully”* is never merciful. On the other hand, and even harder to comprehend, *“mercy”* is not *“forgiveness”* as we understand forgiveness. Consider this: A life guard is sitting at his post on the beach. He hears the cries of one who is drowning, *“Save me! Save me!”* The life guard is trained for the purpose of rescuing those who are drowning, but instead of rescuing, he simply picks up his megaphone and shouts to the victim, *“I forgive you.”* As the one drowning is going down for the last time, and gives one last gasp for

help, the life guard says again, *“I forgive you for drowning! You must believe that I have forgiven you,”* as the drowning man sinks beneath the waves to rise no more. We can readily see that *“forgiveness for drowning”* was not what this person needed; instead, they needed someone to *“save them from drowning.”* By the same example, how can we not see that forgiveness is not the answer needed for the one *“drowning in sin?”* If Christ died to *“forgive”* us and leave us in sin, He would be neither *“merciful”* nor *“gracious,”* because we would still be dying in sin, instead of *“saved from sin”* Matthew 1:21. Mercy on the part of the lifeguard would have rescued the one drowning out of the waves of the sea, and mercy on the part of God will do the same for those who are *“drowning in sin”* when they call upon Him. The apostle Paul says He is *“rich unto all that call upon Him”* Romans 10:12.

“...and gracious...” What is grace? The automatic answer given by the vast majority of believers is *“unmerited favor,”* which is a theological definition, and has nothing to do with the actual definition of the word. *“Grace,”* according to Strong’s Concordance in the New Testament Greek, means *“graciousness of act or manner,”* and in the Old Testament Hebrew it is simply *“graciousness.”* There is that wonderful *“grace of God”* that is *“unmerited,”* which was bestowed upon all humanity at Calvary, of which I will speak further in this message, but for now we will see that grace is almost never given without some *“merit”* on the part of the one receiving it.

The first time the word *“grace”* is used in the bible is Genesis 6:8: *“But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.”* God was *“gracious”* to Noah almost nine hundred years before Moses discovered the grace of God. *“Graciousness”* is the number one attribute of God. A brief search of the scriptures reveals that 26 out of 40 times the word *“grace”* is found in the Old Testament, it is always *“in the sight”* or *“in the eyes”* of the beholder. In each of these places, grace was given as the result of something that was seen by the one giving grace. From the fall of Adam until Christ died for us, *“grace”* was never *“unmerited favor.”* In the case of Noah, God explained why he was chosen to receive grace: *“Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God”*

Genesis 6:9. The secret of Noah's walk with God was that he was a man who "*believed God*" Hebrews 11:7, and would "*obey His voice.*" God has said, "*I...will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy*" Exodus 33:19. There is, however, a criterion by which God gives grace to man. It is always those who "*believe God*" Genesis 15:6 and "*obey His voice*" Genesis 22:16-18 who live their lives in the graciousness of God.

Consider the case of Cain and Abel, who were the first two sons of Adam and Eve. There is much we do not know in the background of their story, but we do know that both of them approached God with an offering. The scripture says, "*And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering: But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect...*" Genesis 4:4-5. Some think God was unfair to Cain. He truly wanted God "*to be pleased*" with his offering, so he brought the very best of the fruit of his labors for his offering to God. On the other hand, Abel wanted "*to please God,*" so he brought what God had asked of each of them, a "*firstborn lamb*" out of his flock. The difference between these two brothers is that Abel both "*believed God*" and "*obeyed His voice.*" The apostle Paul would list him as the first of the "*heroes of faith,*" saying, "*By faith (believing God) Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness **that he was righteous** ...*" Hebrews 11:4. Abel was the first among fallen humanity to be "*justified by faith.*" He "*believed God*" and his obedience to God proved he was a righteous man.

The graciousness of God is seen upon everyone who both "*believes God*" and "*obeys His voice.*" The eleventh chapter of Hebrews is called the "*faith chapter*" of the bible because it lists so many of those Old Testament saints who both "*believed God*" and "*obeyed His voice.*" Faith on our part is not some "*mysterious power*" we can receive or a "*positive mental attitude*" we can muster up; instead, faith on our part is simply "*believing God.*" Every one of these "*heroes of the faith*" first "*heard*" the voice of God and they "*obeyed His voice*" Exodus 19:5. Noah, "*...being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house...*" Hebrews 11:7. Noah "*heard the voice of God,*" he "*believed God,*" and he "*obeyed God.*" Consider what would

have happened if Noah actually “*believed God,*” but neglected to “*obey His voice?*” The flood would have taken Noah and his household along with the wicked, and planet earth would have become desolate, inhabited only with the fish of the sea.

The first time Abraham “*believed God*” and “*obeyed His voice*” is recorded in the twelfth chapter of Genesis: “*Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed. So Abram departed, as the LORD had spoken unto him*” Genesis 12:1-4.

The apostle Paul speaks of the faith of Abraham in the New Testament as follows; “*By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed...*” Hebrews 11:8. Space does not allow me to go through all the heroes of faith that are recorded, but they all had these things in common; they “*heard the voice of God;*” they “*believed God;*” they “*obeyed His voice;*” and they lived their lives, whether in poverty or wealth, persecution or fame, under the gracious hand of God and enjoyed His favor. God is “*gracious*” to everyone for all time who both “*believe*” and “*obey His voice.*” Let me explain.

A sinner hears the voice of God calling him to repentance. That “*call*” is always with the word “*come.*” Jesus said, “*Come unto me...I will give you rest*” Matthew 11:28. “*...the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely*” Revelation 22:17. The only proper response to the call of the Spirit is to “*come.*” God will never tell a sinner to do some great work to prove himself, or require that he “*improve himself*” by any means. The sinners only obedience is to “*come to Jesus,*” believing that He is “*the Christ*” who came into the world to “*save us from our sin*” Matthew 1:21. Those who believe God and “*come to Jesus*” will also enter into “*the graciousness of God*” Romans 5:2, to “*live*” in His favor. “*...longsuffering...*” Longsuffering is an attribute of God that proceeds out of His “*graciousness.*” It is actually an “*unmerited*

favor” upon those who have not repented and turned to God. Longsuffering is not salvation, but it gives the ungodly a “*space* (time and opportunity) *to repent*” Revelation 2:21, before the wrath of God comes upon the ungodly.

The apostle Peter tells us “*The Lord...is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance...*” II Peter 3:9. Peter does not hesitate, but hastens to say, “*...but the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night...*” verse 10. We are told 41 times in the Old Testament that “*God’s mercy endureth for ever.*” It was a song they sang at the dedication of the temple until the glory of God so filled the place that the priests could not stand to minister; “*For God is good, and His mercy endureth forever*” II Chronicles 5:13. While God’s “*mercy*” is “*forever,*” His longsuffering is not. According to Peter, God was “*longsuffering*” while He “*waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing*” I Peter 3:20. From the time God determined to destroy wicked humanity in the days of Noah until the ark was finished was 120 years. During that time, Noah not only built the ark, but he also “*preached righteousness*” II Peter 2:5, and saved none but those of his own house. The longsuffering of God could have meant salvation to as many as would repent and believe the message Noah preached, but the “*day of the LORD*” came upon them “*as a thief in the night,*” even though they had been warned for 120 years. From the time Jesus foretold the destruction of Jerusalem until Titus of the romans actually fulfilled the prophecy was forty years. That was the “*longsuffering of God,*” in which many thousands were saved by the gospel the apostles preached, but above a million perished when the “*day of the Lord*” did come in 70 A.D, and Jerusalem was destroyed. I fear there are millions of people who are “*living*” on the outskirts of the church; “*believing in Jesus,*” but “*holding to the world.*” They think they are living in “*the grace of God,*” because they have confused His “*longsuffering,*” which has an end, with His “*mercy*” which “*endureth forever.*”

Psalms 50:16-21: “*But unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldst take my covenant in thy mouth? Seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest my words behind thee. When thou sawest a thief, then thou consentedst with*

*him, and hast been partaker with adulterers. Thou givest thy mouth to evil, and thy tongue frameth deceit. Thou sittest and speakest against thy brother; thou slanderest thine own mother's son. **These things hast thou done, and I kept silence; thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself:** but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes."*

A thousand years before Jesus was born to Mary, the priests of Israel had drifted far from God. They continued to offer the animal sacrifices and keep the ritualism of the law. They even declared God's "*statutes*" and spoke of His "*covenant*," but their hearts were far from God. Through the mouth of the psalmist, God indicted them; they "*consented with thieves*," and "*partook with adulterers*." They spoke evil and "*framed deceit*" with their tongues. God said to them, "*You did all these things **and I kept silent**. You thought that my 'silence' was approval, and that I was one just like you.*" God "*broke His silence*" with Israel. The psalmist said, "*Our God shall come, and **shall not keep silence**: a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him*" Psalms 50:3. The "*longsuffering of God*" came to an end, and the "*day of the LORD*" began against the wicked of that nation.

It is easy for one who does not know the scriptures for themselves, to confuse God's "*longsuffering*" with His "*approval*." God is longsuffering with sinners and unbelievers, but He does not approve them. Due to the fact that God does not immediately destroy those who continue in sin, "*ungodly men*" Jude 1:4 have devised religious theories (doctrines of men) that because God is "*gracious*" Exodus 34:6, sin doesn't matter. God told Moses that while He is "*merciful, and gracious*," and "*forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin*," He is also one "*that will by no means clear the guilty...*" Exodus 34:7. God's "*mercy and grace*" to those who trust in Him is without end I Chronicles 16:34, but His longsuffering does have an end, as the apostle Peter said, "*...but the day of the Lord will come*" II Peter 3:10.

"...and abundant in goodness and truth..." The apostle Paul spoke of God's "*abundance*" in his epistle to the Ephesians; "*Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles **the unsearchable riches of Christ***" Ephesians 3:8. God's "*abundance*" is not counted in "*houses*"

and “land.” It is as Jesus said, “*A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.*” Those who “*know God*” know that “*abundant in goodness and truth*” defines “*who God is*” instead of “*what He possesses.*”

Christ is the creator of all things John 1:3. The apostle says, “*...by (in) Him all things consist*” Colossians 1:17. He is “*appointed heir of all things*” Hebrews 1:2, and He “*upholds all things by the word of His power*” Hebrews 1:3. The “*unsearchable riches of Christ*” is Christ Himself. Those who “*abide in Christ*” abide in the kingdom of God, “*blessed*” with “*all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ*” Ephesians 1:3. It is the same with God, the Father of Jesus Christ. He is “*a rewarder of them who diligently seek Him*” Hebrews 11:6. The “*reward*” of those who “*diligently seek Him*” is “*they find Him,*” and thus become the “*heirs of all things*” as “*joint-heirs with Christ*” Romans 8:16-17.

“...keeping mercy for thousands...” In the second commandment, God said, “*I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments*” Exodus 20:5-6. In context, we see that God has promised mercy, not for “*thousands of people,*” but for “*thousands of generations of them that love me*” Deuteronomy 7:9, in contrast to “*visiting iniquities...upon the third and fourth generations of them who hate me.*” His mercy endures forever! Even to those enemies who hate God, He will show mercy and be gracious to all who turn from their sins to trust in Him. It has forever been so.

“...forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin...” In His graciousness towards man, God has forever forgiven the iniquities, transgressions, and sins of those who turn from them to trust in Him. In the New Testament, the apostle Paul speaks of “*godly sorrow,*” which “*worketh repentance unto salvation not to be repented of*” II Corinthians 7:10. Those who “*sin every day*” and “*repent every night*” are seeking protection from their sins much like a promiscuous woman who sins at night and takes the “*morning after pill*” in the morning. They “*love their sin*” but they do not want the result of their sin. The one who can casually say “*God forgive me,*” will also

“casually sin again.” God has forever been *“merciful, gracious, and forgiving,”* but only to those who *“turn from their sins”* to trust in Him.

King David’s repentance to God for his adulterous affair with Bathsheba and plotting the death of her husband Uriah, is recorded in the 51st chapter of the Psalms. Read it closely, and notice that David did not ask, even a single time, for God to forgive him. Instead, he pleaded for something so much more; something no man could receive until *“Christ the creator”* became a man to die on the cross for our sins. David received *“forgiveness”* for his *“iniquity and transgression and sin,”* but that was not his pursuit. He cried to God *“...blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin...”* Psalms 51:1-2, *“...purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow...”* verse 7, *“...create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me ...”* verse 10. Everything David sought God for were things which would be *“freely given”* Romans 8:32 when Christ would offer His body and blood on the cross for us. These are the reason Christ the creator became a man and died on the cross.

“...that will by no means clear the guilty...”

These words define who God is as much as *“merciful and gracious.”* They are a part of the eternal nature of God as much as the words *“...for God so loved...”* John 3:16. Let me hasten to say that God has always *“forgiven”* and *“pardoned”* the guilty when the *“guilty”* would confess their guilt. The one thing God said He would never do is *“clear the guilty.”*

The modern definition of *“justification by faith,”* that God *“declares the guilty to be not guilty,”* and sees them as *“innocent”* and even *“perfect”* while they continue in sin, is an incredible fabrication developed over hundreds of years by unsuspecting pawns in the hands of our adversary, the devil. What could be more of a *“doctrine of the devil”* than to believe that *“sin”* no longer separates a man from God? Let God apologize to the world before the flood; to Sodom and Gomorrah; to Jerusalem whom Nebuchadnezzar destroyed, and to Jerusalem, whom Titus the roman destroyed only forty years after Christ died for the ungodly.

Let Him abolish Hell and the eternal lake of fire, and repent Himself of the wrath to come, because slick preachers and smooth prophets no longer believe that sin separates man from God.

“Justification by faith” is truly the way God justifies the people. We, as Abraham almost four thousand years ago, must *“believe God.”* The scripture says Abraham *“...believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness”* Genesis 15:6. Abraham *“believed God”* when He promised to give him more seed (descendants) than He could number, exactly as the stars of heaven cannot be numbered. We could believe what Abraham believed and it would do nothing for us. We must believe what God has said about His *“only begotten Son,”* Jesus Christ. The apostle John says, *“He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son”* 1 John 5:10. The *“record”* which we must believe begins the same day sin entered into the world through Adam’s disobedience. God gave a promise of *“the seed of the woman (Jesus),”* who would *“bruise the head of the serpent”* Genesis 3:15.

The *“record God gave”* is found in the scriptures of the prophets and seems to reach its climax in the Old Testament record when the angel Gabriel told the prophet Daniel about the coming of *“The Messiah (Christ),”* who would come *“to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness...”* Daniel 9:27. All the apostles confirm the record God gave. This is what the *“gospel of Christ”* is about. The apostle John said, *“And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him”* 1 John 3:5-6. Two verses later, he says *“For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil”* verse 8, and *“Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin...”* verse 9. The apostle Paul says, *“Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin”* Romans 6:6-7.

A dozen verses later, Paul says, “*Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness*” ^{verse 18}, and, “*But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life*” ^{verse 22}. The wonderful things these apostles speak of cannot be the “*result*” of a “*process*.” Neither philosophy, psychiatry, principles, nor step plans can bring you to these wonderful results which Christ died to freely give to us ^{Romans 8:32}. It is “*by faith*” they are received, and it is at the cross they were accomplished.

Romans 5:1: “*Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:*”

Romans 5:9: “*Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.*”

If God has said He will never “*clear the guilty*,” what will He do for them? First, He will “*pardon*” their guilt if they turn from their sins to trust in Him, exactly as He has done from the beginning. The prophet Isaiah said, “*Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon*” ^{Isaiah 55:7}. As we have established earlier in this message, there was no need for the eternal Christ to become a man and die on the cross for God to forgive and pardon our sins. Christ came and died to do “*much more*” than forgive those sinners who will “*believe God*” and “*trust in Christ*.” He came to “*take their sin away*” ^{John 1:29}. For those who trust in Him, He will give them a “*new heart*” and a “*new spirit*” ^{Ezekiel 36:26}, “*purifying their hearts by faith*” ^{Acts 15:8-9}. He will “*free them from sin*” ^{Romans 6:6-7}, and cause that “*holiness*” will be their “*fruit*” ^{Romans 6:22}, and not their constant struggle.

“...visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation.” Again, we *must* look to the second commandment of the “*Ten Commandments*” to fully understand this statement. “*...I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me*” ^{Exodus 20:5}.

An amazingly foolish doctrine has been given to the church that says a child of God can be “*under a curse*” because of their forefather’s sins. Numerous people have come to me during the many years of my ministry, asking me if I could “*break a generational curse*” that was upon them. In every case, some foolish minister had told them they were “*under a curse,*” but none of them could “*break the curse.*” In almost every case, I began by shocking them with a question; “*Why do you hate God?*” In every case the answer would be somewhat indignant, “*I don’t hate God!*” I would ask, “*Why then do you think you are under a curse? Generational curses are only for those who hate God.*”

The second commandment continues to say, “*...and shewing mercy unto thousands (of generations) of them that love me, and keep my commandments*” Exodus 20:6. The question comes to my mind, “*What happens after God visits the third and fourth generations of those who hate God?*” If they have not repented, His “*longsuffering*” ends and the “*day of the Lord*” against them begins. Peter spoke of the “*longsuffering*” of God, that He is “*not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night...*” II Peter 3:9-10. For those who “*hate God,*” nothing ever gets better; it only gets much worse.

The “*war against Jesus*” in our nation became openly manifest in 1963 when our U.S. Supreme Court ruled against the Lord’s Prayer and scripture readings in our public schools. This “*attack*” came from those few in America at that time who “*hated God,*” and especially hated every mention of Jesus Christ. The fourth generation of those who “*hate God*” is living right now, and many of them are rioting in the streets. Almost 50% of Americans have allied themselves with those who “*hate God.*” The political upheaval which is taking place in America is the result of four generations of the “*war*” against Jesus Christ by those who “*hate God.*” Perhaps God has intervened for the righteous, but His “*longsuffering*” for the “*Jesus-haters*” is almost at an end, and when longsuffering ends, the “*Day of the Lord*” begins.

Part II: To Whom God is Gracious?

God alone has set the criteria for those to whom He will be gracious. He promised the children of Israel, "If ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people." This is God's criteria; "trust and obey."

Exodus 33:19: *"And He (God) said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy."*

God is a "sovereign God," which means He can do anything He chooses to do. Certainly, He has the power to do so, but He has always "limited" His power according to criteria He Himself has set. Many people believe God has "predestined" everything that has happened on this planet, even before He created the universe. Could He have done such a thing? Yes, of course He could have, but He did not. While it is true that God is "omnipotent," which means He is "all powerful," He has always limited His power. We know this, because "unlimited power" brings "chaos," and not "order." God is also "omniscient," which means He is all knowledge, and He is "omnipresence," which means He is everywhere, but just as He limits His power, he also limits His knowledge and His presence. This being said, it is man and not God who determines who God will be gracious to, and to whom He will shew mercy, but it is God who has set the criterion by which this determination is made. Let me explain.

In **part I, page 3** of this message, we see how Jesus was "merciful and gracious" to everyone who came to Him for mercy. The blind beggar received His sight; the ten leprous men were cleansed from their leprosy; and the man with the lunatic son received mercy when Jesus cured his son. Others along the way received nothing from Jesus even though they had great needs themselves, but they did not either "come" or "call" to Jesus. It is not sufficient to say "some were predestined, and some were not." The apostle John says "...whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish..." John 3:16, while the final call of the Spirit says, "...whosoever will, let him take the

water of life freely” Revelation 22:17. It is those who “*believe God,*” and not those who refuse to believe, who receive graciousness from God.

Exodus 32:31-33: “*And Moses returned unto the LORD, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin--; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written. And the LORD said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book.*”

This is the second time Moses made intercession for the children of Israel. The first time was on the mountain with God when God saw the golden calf and would have destroyed the children of Israel. He told Moses, “...*let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make of thee a great nation*” Exodus 32:10. To Moses’ credit, he disregarded the possibility of himself becoming a “*great nation,*” and interceded for the lives of the children of Israel, telling God, “*Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people.*” It was only when Abraham reminded God of His promise to Abraham, that He relented: “*Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants, to whom thou swarest by thine own self, and saidst unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have spoken of will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it for ever*” Exodus 32:13. The next verse simply says, “*And the LORD repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people*” verse 14.

Moses first intercession for the children of Israel, which he based upon God’s promise to Abraham, was successful. His second intercession failed to move God because Moses based it upon himself: “*If thou wilt forgive their sin--; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written*” Exodus 32:32. In this, God established forever that He will not punish the righteous to spare the guilty. God’s response to this second intercession by Moses was very different than the first: “*Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book*” verse 33. It is obvious that God did not forgive the children of Israel that day. The chapter ends two verses later, saying, “*And the LORD plagued the people, because they made the calf, which Aaron made*” Verse 35.

Exodus 33:1-3: *“And the LORD said unto Moses, Depart, and go up hence, thou and the people which thou hast brought up out of the land of Egypt, unto the land which I sware unto Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, saying, Unto thy seed will I give it: And **I will send an angel before thee**; and I will drive out the Canaanite, the Amorite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite: Unto a land flowing with milk and honey: **for I will not go up in the midst of thee**; for thou art a stiffnecked people: **lest I consume thee in the way.**”*

Exodus 33:7: *“And Moses took the tabernacle, and pitched it without the camp, afar off from the camp, and called it the Tabernacle of the congregation. And it came to pass, that **every one which sought the LORD went out unto the tabernacle of the congregation, which was without the camp.**”*

Moses and Joshua *“found grace in the eyes of God.”* Neither of these men had turned away when God spoke from the mountain. Neither of them were there when Aaron made the calf of gold, and the people worshiped it. According to the record, when Moses took the tabernacle out of the camp and pitched it *“...afar off from the camp,”* Moses and Joshua were the only two recorded who left the camp to worship God. The tabernacle was moved from the midst of the camp out of necessity to keep the presence of God, because God had told Moses, *“**I will not go up in the midst of thee, for thou art a stiffnecked people.**”*

God had offered grace to the entire congregation of Israel less than two months before this time when He brought them to Mount Sinai and revealed Himself to them in an audible voice. He promised them, *“If ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation”* Exodus 19:5-6. Had they received *“the grace”* which God offered to them, they would have lived all their lifetime in the blessings and favor of God. Within a year they would have entered triumphantly into the land of promise instead of *“wandering in the wilderness”* for forty years. The *“history”* of the nation of Israel would have been drastically different than what it is today. They would have become the dominate nation in the world, and when

Christ came, they would have received Him and brought salvation to the rest of the world. Such was not to be, however.

When God spoke to them out of the burning mountain, they refused to even listen to His voice, much less would they “*obey Him.*” Within two months, while Moses was on the mountain with God, they demanded Aaron, whom Moses had left in charge, to give them “...*gods, to go before them*” Exodus 32:1. Aaron gathered the gold jewelry the people had “*borrowed*” from the Egyptians Exodus 3:21-22, and fashioned a calf of gold for the people to worship. This was such an offence against God that He would have destroyed the entire congregation if it had not been for the intercession Moses made for the people. Rather than receiving the “*grace of God*” at Sinai, it was there that they fell into disfavor with God when they refused to hear His voice, and God refused to go with them into the Promised Land.

Exodus 33:12-13: “*And Moses said unto the LORD, See, thou sayest unto me, Bring up this people: and thou hast not let me know whom thou wilt send with me. Yet thou hast said, I know thee by name, and thou hast also found grace in my sight. Now therefore, I pray thee, if I have found grace in thy sight, shew me now thy way, that I may know thee, that I may find grace in thy sight: and consider that this nation is thy people.*”

Notice that Moses said to God, “*thou hast not let me know whom thou wilt send with me.*” Only minutes before, God had told Moses He would send an angel to bring them into the land of promise. When Moses asked to know “*whom thou wilt send with me,*” God did not hesitate; He said, “*My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest*” verse 14. Moses had “*found grace in the eyes of God,*” but the congregation had not. God clearly told Moses, “*I will go with you, but I will not go with them.*” Everything Moses would ask of God for himself, he would receive, but not even Moses could stop the anger that was in God against His “*chosen people.*” It is in this setting that we hear God tell Moses, “*I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy.*” Moses discovered that God is a sovereign God. He could successfully hold God to His promise to Abraham, who had “*believed*” and “*obeyed*” God, but

he could not force God to show grace to those who refused to “believe God” and “obey His voice.” God would be gracious to Moses, Joshua, Caleb, and as many as would believe and trust in Him, but to show His mercy and graciousness upon a stiffnecked and rebellious people, not even Moses could cause God to do it. God has never randomly chosen whom He will save, and whom He will damn. To believe such a thing is to bring insult against the “*spirit of grace*” that is given to those who believe God and trust in Christ

Hebrews 10:29.

Part III: “Unmerited Favor”

When Christ became a man (the incarnation) to offer His body and blood as a “lamb” to “take away the sin of the world,” that was “unmerited favor.” He did not take our punishment; He took our “sin” and made all who will believe this simple truth “free indeed” from sin.

I Peter 1:10: “...of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of **the grace** that should come unto you...”

The word “*grace*,” as used throughout the Old Testament and much of the New Testament, is an adjective. The definition given for the New Testament Greek word is “*graciousness of act or manner.*” As an adjective, grace gives the wonderful description of God we have seen in part I of this message. In the New Testament, however, something about the word “*grace*” has changed with the death of Jesus Christ on the cross. When Peter speaks of “**the grace that should come unto you,**” the word “*grace*” has become a “*noun*,” which includes everything God has done to save sinners through the death of His Son, Jesus Christ.

Peter said the prophets prophesied of “*the grace*” that would come to us. Not understanding what they were seeing and hearing, the scripture says they “*enquired and searched diligently...*”

I Peter 1:11: “*Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.*”

The prophets enquired of God, *“What is this? When will this be?”* The prophets were seeing and hearing something they could not possibly understand in their day. There was no precedent for the things they were seeing. They could only describe what they saw, and write what they heard. Peter said it was *“the Spirit of Christ”* who spoke through the prophets to reveal the wonderful salvation which was to come to us. The things they saw were a *“mixture”* of things horrible and wonderful, but the *“wonderful”* came out of the *“horrible.”* Does that sound like a riddle? They foresaw the *“sufferings of Christ”* (horrible to see), and they saw *“the glory that would follow”* (unbelievably wonderful). David described both *“the horrible (the sufferings of Christ)”* and *“the wonderful (the glory that followed)”* to near perfection in the 22nd Psalm. It is in the incarnation of Christ and His sufferings on the cross that we see, for the first time, grace as *“unmerited favor”* from God.

The Sufferings of Christ

Psalms 22:1: *“My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”*

Fulfilled - **Matthew 27:46:** *“And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”*

Psalms 22:7-8: *“All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, **He trusted on the LORD that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him.**”*

Fulfilled - **Matthew 27:43:** *“**He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him:** for he said, I am the Son of God.”*

Psalms 22:16: *“For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have enclosed me: **they pierced my hands and my feet.**”*

Fulfilled - **Luke 23:33:** *“And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, **there they crucified him ...**”*

Psalms 22:18: *“They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture.”*

Fulfilled - **Mark 15:24:** *“And when they had crucified him, **they parted his garments, casting lots upon them, what every man should take.**”*

This description of Calvary is so incredibly accurate, it seems to have been written by an “eyewitness” to the crucifixion of Christ. It was, however, written by King David a thousand years before Christ came into the world. Peter said it was “*the Spirit of Christ that was in them*” that foretold “*the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that would follow.*”

The Glory that Followed

Psalms 22:30-31: “*A seed shall serve him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation. They shall come, and shall declare his righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that he hath done this.*”

In only thirty five words David describes “*the glory that would follow.*” It is a prophecy of the “*New Creation,*” a people such as had never inhabited the earth since sin entered the world through the disobedience of Adam. This also is “*unmerited favor.*”

“***A seed shall serve Him...***” The apostle Paul spoke of “*the law,*” which was “*...added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made*” Galatians 3:19. Paul said “*the seed...is Christ*” Galatians 3:16, as well as those who are “*...the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus*” Galatians 3:26. These are “*...Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise*” verse 29.

The “*seed*” are first “*the children of God through faith in Jesus Christ,*” and only then are they “*Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.*” They “*serve Him,*” not as those under the law serve Him, but as those who are “*free from sin*” to “*serve Him*” Romans 6:22. These are “*...neither Jew nor Greek...bond nor free...male nor female*” Galatians 3:28, because they are “*all one in Christ Jesus.*” They are a people gathered to Christ “*...from all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues*” Revelation 7:9.

“***...it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation.***” Very simply stated, they shall be “*born again,*” the “*children of God.*”

“***They shall come...***” The call of the gospel is forever to simply “*come.*” Jesus said, “*Come unto me, and I will give you rest.*” The same is the call of the Spirit; “*The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come.*”

And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely” Revelation 22:17. These, as we have said above, have “*come to Jesus Christ*” from every nation and kindred, from every people and tongue.

“...and shall declare his righteousness...” To “*declare His righteous*” is to preach both “*the sufferings of Christ*” and “*the glory that follows*” for all who will believe. Paul related to this prophecy in his letter to the romans when he spoke of “*...the redemption which is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus*” Romans 3:24-26.

“...unto a people that shall be born...” Obviously every person who has lived on earth since Adam and Eve were “*born*” into this world. The gospel is preached to those who “*shall be born,*” that is, “*born again*” of the Spirit of God if they “*believe the gospel*” and “*trust in Christ.*”

“...that he hath done this.” The 22nd Psalm describes both the “*sufferings of Christ*” and the “*glory that follows.*” The preaching of the gospel of Christ must also point to both; “*the sufferings*” as the cause, and “*the glory*” as the result. The “*glory*” that followed “*the sufferings of Christ*” is “*the New Creation in Christ*” II Corinthians 5:17. It is not merely a “*forgiven people,*” but a “*people*” such as has not existed on earth since the fall of Adam. They are the “*children of God almighty.*” They are “*created in righteousness and true holiness*” Ephesians 4:24. They are “*renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him*” Colossians 3:10. Their very existence on this planet is “*to the praise of His glory*” Ephesians 1:12, because “*...He hath done this.*” Christ did this at Calvary...it is “*unmerited favor.*”

“Unmerited Favor”

From the fall of Adam until the incarnation of Christ, grace was given only to those who “*believed God*” and “*obeyed His voice.*” Grace was never “*unmerited favor*” during the four thousand years from Adam to Christ. The first act of unmerited favor was when Christ, the creator, “*emptied Himself*” Philippians 2:7 to become “*the*

seed of the woman” for the sole purpose of “*bruising the head of the serpent,*” and thus “*destroying the works of the devil*” I John 3:8. Through His death on the cross, Jesus Christ “*destroyed he that had the power of death, that is, the devil*” Hebrews 2:14, and reconciled to God all who will believe II Corinthians 5:19. There was absolutely no “*merit*” found in any man or woman since the fall of Adam and Eve to warrant such an act of grace and love. Christ died for the ungodly, to whom God had never shown favor. He died for sinners and enemies whom God would have destroyed. That Christ the creator would lay down His life for sinners and enemies is certainly “*unmerited favor.*” Both “*the incarnation of Christ*” and “*the sufferings of Christ*” were a gift from God, offered without any merit on the part of fallen man. That God would do such a thing for us is certainly “*unmerited favor.*”

The same night Christ was born in Bethlehem, the angels of God sang in chorus to the shepherds, “*Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men*” Luke 2:14. I have heard those who change the words of the angels to say “*...on earth peace to men of good will.*” Such an interpretation robs us of the “*unmerited*” aspect of the incarnation. Christ died for all. If it was a “*limited atonement*” as many say, then it could not have been “*unmerited favor.*” Christ came into this evil world with nothing but “*good will toward men* (all of humanity).” If He had come only for the redemption of a “*selected few,*” as many say, then even His death on the cross would in itself have been an act of great injustice.

Romans 8:3-4: “*For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*”

Almost a thousand years before the law was given, God destroyed “*all flesh*” with the exception of righteous Noah and his household. The scriptures give the reason for this total destruction: “*And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually*” Genesis 6:5. Every “*sinner*” on earth was destroyed, but “*sin*” survived the flood in the heart and nature of those He spared.

Less than five hundred years later, God destroyed every inhabitant of Sodom and Gomorrah with the exception of Lot and his two daughters. A little over a thousand years later, God brought the army of Babylon against His “*holy city*,” Jerusalem, to destroy both the city and the temple, because of the abominations in the temple, yet He spared every righteous person in the city.

Sin in the nature of man is the dominant trait. Even those in the Old Testament who were counted to be “*righteous*,” because they “*believed and obeyed God*,” were prone to failures because of sin in their heart and nature. Some teachers, seeking to show that those who “*trust in Christ*” are still “*sinners*,” love to point out the “*drunkenness*” of Noah Genesis 9:20-21; the “*lies*” of Abraham Genesis 20:2; the “*adultery*” and “*murder*” committed by David II Samuel 11:2-6; the “*affairs*” of Samson Judges 16:1-4; and the “*disobedience*” of Moses Numbers 20:8-12. Those who teach such things are “*willingly ignorant*” II Peter 3:5 of the “*better thing*” Hebrews 11:39-40 which God has provided for the believer when Christ died for the ungodly Romans 5:6. If sin is not “*taken away*,” out of the heart and nature of man, it will continue to work in them night and day until it drags them down to destruction. Saul of Tarsus, a man who kept “*the righteousness that is in the law blamelessly*” Philippians 3:6 experienced the struggle with inward sin, which was “*...warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members*” Romans 7:23. In the next verse, it is Saul of Tarsus **before He met Jesus**, who cried, “*O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?*” verse 24. Only then did Saul of Tarsus meet Jesus Christ, who delivered Him from the sin that was in his heart and nature. Acts 9:1-6, Romans 7:25.

The law could kill the sinner, but it could not “*kill the sin that was in the sinner*.” Christ came “*in the likeness of sinful flesh*” to “*do what the law could not do*.” Through His death on the cross, Jesus Christ destroyed the sin that was in the sinner for those who believe and trust in Him. This is the “*unmerited favor*” that God gave to sinners. The wonderful salvation He died to freely give is received by us on the “*merit*” of faith. It is those who “*believe God*” I John 5:10 who are “*saved from sin*” Matthew 1:21; from its “*guilt*,” from its “*pollution*,” from its “*power*,” and **from its “*presence*.”** Christ

came into the world as the “*seed of the woman*” to “*bruise the head of the serpent*” Genesis 3:15, to “*destroy he that had the power of death, that is, the devil*” Hebrews 2:14, and to “*destroy the works of the devil*” I John 3:8. He died as a lamb without spot or blemish, the “*Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world*” John 1:29, I John 3:5. This is “*the record that God gave of His Son*” I John 5:10; the “*record*” we must believe, lest we should “*die in our sins*” John 8:24, and be lost.

The Lamb Slain from the Foundation of the World

The day after the Holy Ghost came upon Jesus at John’s baptism, John saw Jesus approaching and announced to all who could hear, “*Behold, the lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.*” The apostle John, in his visions in the revelation, saw “*a lamb, as it had been slain*” Revelation 5:5-6, which proved to be Jesus Christ, crucified. Later in the revelation, he spoke of “*...the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*” Revelation 13:8. It is important to understand that “*the foundation of the world*” is not the same as “*the creation of the earth.*” Those who seek to prove predestination often misuse this verse to show that God planned the destiny of every person who would ever live, including the fall of man and the redemption at Calvary before He created the universe. They misinterpret this verse to say Jesus is “*...the Lamb slain before the creation of the earth,*” which is proven not to be the case.

The apostle Paul speaks of “*...our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world...*” Galatians 1:4. What Paul calls “*this present evil world*” was “*founded*” the same day sin entered into the world by the disobedience of Adam. The scripture does not say “*the lamb*” was slain “*before,*” but “*from*” the foundation of the world. The day sin entered “*into the world*” Romans 5:12 through Adam’s transgression, is the same day this “*present evil world*” was founded, and the serpent, called Satan and Lucifer, became “*the god of this world*” II Corinthians 4:4, whom Jesus called “*the Prince of this world*” John 12:31, 14:30, 16:11.

On the same dreadful day that sin entered into the world, God gave the promise of “*the seed of the woman*” who would “*bruise the head of the serpent*” Genesis 3:15, and “*take away the sin of the world*” John 1:29. That was the day God determined that Christ, “*the Word,*” who

was “*with God,*” and who “*was God,*” would become a man in the womb of a virgin. Christ would come into the world as both “*the seed of the woman*” and “*the Son of God.*” There was no other way, because “*sin,*” which is “*the nature of the serpent,*” had polluted every descendant of Adam, and there would never be a “*man*” of this world who could by any means destroy the devil. The creator of the first creation had to become “*the seed of the woman*” to “*destroy the works of the devil*” John 3:8 through His death, and bring in a “*New Creation*” through His resurrection I Peter 1:3. Christ the creator died on the cross to destroy the old, and was raised again from the dead as the beginning of the new. Ephesians 2:10. There was no other way. This was God’s “*unmerited favor*” to us.

Satan “Cast Out” ...by the Blood of the Lamb

About four days before His death on the cross, and on the same day as His “*Triumphal Entry*” John 12:12-13, Jesus opened a discussion of His upcoming death. At one point He cried out, “*Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour*” John 12:27. Jesus Christ was “*born to die.*” He cried out again to His Father, not “*save me from this hour,*” but “*Father, glorify thy name*” verse 28. Everyone in the vicinity heard a great voice speaking from heaven. Some said that it thundered; others said an angel spoke to Jesus, but it was God, the Father of Jesus Christ, saying “*I have both glorified it (His name), and will glorify it again.*” Next comes a declaration from Jesus which explains to those who can hear, what His death on the cross was really about. Jesus announced to all who could hear, “*Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world (Satan) be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth (crucified), will draw all men unto me*” John 12:31-32. Christ came into the world “*for this cause.*”

Revelation 12:7-11: “*And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. 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.*”

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. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb ...”

Several things we should understand when we read this account. Satan was not cast out of heaven before the creation, as some say. He will not be cast out of heaven sometime in our future, as others say. Jesus spoke of the time Satan would be cast out of heaven only four days before He died on the cross when He said, “*Now shall the prince of this world (Satan) be cast out.*”

Michael and his angels had fought with Satan (the dragon) and his angels for at least four thousand years, from the time he (Satan, Lucifer, the serpent, the devil, etc.) exalted himself against God. Neither side could prevail against the other until Christ, the creator, became a man and offered Himself to die on the cross. The apostle Paul said of Jesus Christ, “*...through death, He destroyed...the devil*” Hebrews 2:14. The apostle John saw in the visions, “*...the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan...*” Revelation 12:9. John also understood the time that Satan was cast out when he heard a “*loud voice in heaven,*” saying, “*Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ.*” When did salvation come? When Christ died for us. When did “*strength*” come? “*For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly*” Romans 5:6. When was Satan cast out of heaven? The answer is found in verse eleven; “*And they overcame him (Satan) by the blood of the lamb.*” Michael and his angels were the first to overcome the devil “*by the blood of the lamb,*” and Satan, “*that old serpent, the devil,*” was cast out.

The Righteousness of God to Save Sinners

Romans 5:12: “*Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.*”

It was not because of anything we have done that Christ died for us; it was because of what we could not do for ourselves. The “*Strong’s*” definition of “*mercy*” is “*compassion.*” The scriptural

definition of “*mercy*” as seen in the ministry of Jesus is “*to do for another what they cannot do for themselves.*” This is “*unmerited favor.*” All of humanity became slaves to sin because of Adam’s transgression against God, which allowed sin, the “*nature of the serpent,*” to take control of every descendant of Adam Romans 5:12. We were born with sin in our nature, and we “*sinned*” because we were “*sinners by nature.*” No one had a choice as to whether they would be a sinner or not. As David said, “*...none can keep alive his own soul*” Psalms 22:29. Christ came into the world, to “*take away the sin*” John 1:29 that entered “*into the world*” when Adam disobeyed God. This was “*unmerited favor.*”

Romans 5:19: “*For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.*”

If we were “*made sinners*” by “*the disobedience of Adam,*” the only possible remedy was that we would be “*made righteous*” by another man’s obedience. There had to be a “*second man,*” but it could not be “*just a man.*” This is the reason for the promise of “*the seed of the woman*” who would “*bruise the head of the serpent*” Genesis 3:15. This “*seed of the woman*” was destined to be the “*second man,*” who would “*take away sin*” by “*bruising the head of the serpent,*” and thus “*make many (as many as would believe) righteous.*” The “*seed of the woman,*” however, was only a promise of a redeemer to come. Never was there one found who could fulfil this promise, because every man who was born of a woman was born with a sin polluted nature. There was only one solution, which is what we call “*the incarnation,*” when “*God*” became a “*man.*” (*unmerited favor*)

The “**Last Adam**” and the “**Second Man**”

I Corinthians 15:45: “*And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.*”

I Corinthians 15:47: “*The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven.*”

Jesus Christ is both the “*last Adam*” and the “*second man.*” As the “*last Adam,*” it is worthy of note that His genealogy and lineage were a direct line back to the first man, Adam. According to the record of Matthew, there were 42 generations from Abraham to

Christ ^{Matthew 1:17}. According to the lineage given by Luke, there were 20 generations from Adam to Abraham, giving us a total of 62 generations from Adam to Christ. The lineage from Adam to Christ is the main trunk of Adam's "*family tree*," and not one of the many "*branches*." That "*main trunk*" was cut off and came to an end when Jesus Christ died on the cross. He never married, and He had no children to carry on the lineage of Adam, thus, Jesus Christ was "*the last Adam*" that would ever be accepted by God.

The prophet Isaiah prophesied of this, saying, "*He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken*" ^{Isaiah 53:8}. He died without children, and had "*no generation*" to declare. Isaiah continued, however, to say, "*Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed* (Spirit born children of God), *he shall prolong his days* (resurrection from the dead), *and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand* (His reign at the right hand of God)" ^{Isaiah 53:10}.

As the "*last Adam*," his death marked the end of the old, sin polluted creation for the believer. Paul confirmed this great truth in his letter to the romans; "*Knowing this, that our old man* (Adam) *is crucified with* (in union with) *Him* (Christ), *that* (in order that) *the body of sin might* (would) *be destroyed...*" ^{Romans 6:6}. Our "*old man in Adam*" died on the cross and was placed in the tomb. A "*new man in Christ*" came out of the tomb with (in union with) Christ ^{Ephesians 2:5}. In the believer, Adam is dead, and Christ lives. This is "*unmerited favor*."

As the "*second man*," Jesus Christ is the "*first man*" of a "*New creation*," which is "*created in righteousness and true holiness*" ^{Ephesians 4:24}, and "*...after the image of Him who created him*" ^{Colossians 3:10}. Peter tells us that God has "*...begotten us again* (born again) *unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled...*" ^{I Peter 1:3-4}.

In conclusion, both the "*incarnation*" and the "*sufferings and death of Christ*" were God's "*unmerited favor*" to fallen humanity. Christ "*loved us and gave Himself for us*" ^{Galatians 2:20} to give us new life in

Him, “*freed from sin*” Romans 5:7, 18, 22, to serve Him “*without fear*” Luke 1:74, in righteousness and true holiness, all the days of our life.

Part IV: This Grace

Peter spoke of “the grace” God sent to us, which was fulfilled when Christ died for us. The death of Christ to reconcile sinners, the ungodly, and enemies to God is “unmerited favor.” Paul speaks of “this grace,” which is offered freely to “everyone who will believe.” God’s “unmerited favor” at Calvary destroyed sin, Satan, and every work of the devil for those who will believe. Those who do “believe God” live their lives in “this grace” with freedom from sin and fullness of joy.

Romans 5:1-2: “*Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.*”

Those who have been “*justified*” by “*faith in Christ*” have been “*rendered just or innocent*” (Strong’s Greek Dictionary). According to the definition of “*just,*” they have been made “*equitable in character and act.*” The word “*render*” in the English dictionary is defined several ways according to how it is used. The number one definition given by “*Webster’s Dictionary*” is “*to cause to be or become; to make.*” Modern religious thought says God justifies a person and nothing changes about the person. According to the scripture, however, everything about a sinner changes the moment he (or she) is “*justified by faith,*” because they are “*made righteous*” Romans 5:19. Their heart has been “*purified by faith*” Acts 15:9, and they are “*freed from sin*” Romans 6:7, 22, and thus “*freed*” from the struggle to serve God. It is to these who have been “*made righteous*” by their faith in Christ that Paul continues to speak; “*By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand....*”

When Peter spoke of “*the grace*” I Peter 1:10 which the Old Testament prophets said would come to us, he referred to the “*incarnation of Christ* (when God became a man)” and the “*sufferings of Christ* (His death on the cross).” When Paul speaks of “*this grace wherein we stand,*” he refers to what Peter called “*the glory*” that would

follow the sufferings of Christ I Peter 1:11, which is *“the new creation in Christ Jesus”* II Corinthians 5:17.

We are *“justified by faith”* when we believe what Christ has done in our behalf through His sufferings and death on the cross. *“Therefore being justified by faith...we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand...”* Romans 5:1-2. We have been *“delivered from the power of darkness”* (justified by faith), and *“translated into the kingdom of God’s dear Son”* (this grace) Colossians 1:13. We are the beneficiaries, by faith, of all that Christ accomplished in our behalf through His death on the cross. We are *“heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ”* Romans 8:17. Simply said, we are *“in Christ.”*

Jesus spoke of two kingdoms when He said *“...in me ye have peace, in the world ye have tribulation...”* John 16:33. Jesus said, *“Abide in me”* John 15:4; the apostle John said, *“Abide in Him”* I John 2:28. In this present evil world there is no peace. Satan is *“the god of this world”* II Corinthians 4:4, and he controls his people with *“sin.”* He has *“made the world as a wilderness”* and *“destroyed the cities thereof”* Isaiah 14:16-17. Those who seek happiness in the things of this world will have no peace, but we, we have been given access into a kingdom of *“righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost”* Romans 14:17.

In our *“kingdom (Christ)”* there is no devil and there is no sin. The apostle John says, *“Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not”* I John 3:6. He continues in the same verse, *“Whosoever sinneth hath not seen Him, neither known Him.”* There is no sinner in Christ, but Christ came to *“save sinners from their sin”* Matthew 1:21 and freely bring them into His kingdom.

The man or woman who *“abides in Christ”* will live their life on this earth in the kingdom of God Colossians 1:13. This does not mean they will never suffer persecution II Timothy 3:12, nor does it mean they will be *“rich and famous”* in the things of this world. They will, however, live their lifetime in the graciousness of God. They will experience the *“goodness”* and not the *“severity”* of God Romans 11:22. Those who *“abide in Christ”* are blessed by God exactly as those who *“believe God”* and *“obey his voice”* Exodus 19:5 have always been blessed.

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