

Behold  the Lamb
Publications

*The Mystery
of
Grace*

by Leroy Surface

A Mystery

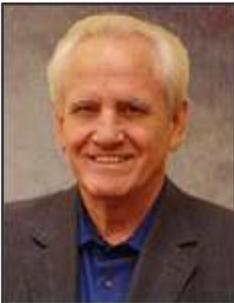
When something is hidden from our understanding, it is called a mystery. The Apostle Paul spoke seventeen times of “mysteries” in his epistles, including “*the mystery of Godliness,*” “*the mystery of iniquity,*” “*mystery of the gospel,*” “*the mystery of Christ,*” and “*the mystery of the faith.*” He was sent to declare these mysteries of the gospel which he said had “*....been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints.*” Colossians 1:26. These mysteries once revealed were never supposed to be hidden again. They are the “*simplicity of Christ*” and were ordained to be declared clearly to the entire world for every generation. Sadly, this has not been the case.

The message in this booklet is a mystery that has been hidden in plain sight from the people of God for over nineteen centuries. It was at the end of the first generation of the church that Jude wrote a warning to the church of his generation, saying, “*There are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness...*” Jude 1:4. As this “perverted” doctrine took hold, the truth of God's grace once again became a mystery and as a result the church began its slide into the dark ages.

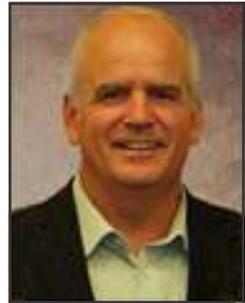
In my limited knowledge of the great men of God in history, I have never found one who has corrected the error of “lascivious grace” during

the nineteen centuries since Jude gave the warning. The apostle Peter received his understanding of grace from the prophets of God who spoke of “*the grace that would come to us*” 1 Peter 1:10. The apostle Paul goes into much greater depth, speaking of “*this grace wherein we stand*” Romans 5:2. Our message, which we call “**The Mystery of Grace**” simply

points to the things these great apostles of Christ told us in the scriptures. We have no revelation beyond what God has said through His holy apostles and prophets in the scriptures. I believe you may be pleasantly surprised as you see “*the grace*” which is clearly written in the scriptures.



Leroy Surface



Keith Surface

The Mystery of Grace

By Leroy Surface

By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Romans 5:2

What do you know about “*grace?*” Is it “*unmerited favor?*” Does it “*cover sin?*” or “*sinners?*” Grace is perhaps the most misunderstood doctrine of the New Covenant. Jude wrote, “*Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for **the faith** which was once delivered unto the saints*” Jude 1:3. Notice that Jude used the term “*the faith.*” He is contending for “*the faith of Jesus Christ,*” which Paul preached in his gospel. It wasn't just “*faith*” Jude was concerned about, but “**the faith.**” Even in Jude's day the gospel of Christ had been perverted by false teachers. Jude continued in the fourth verse: “*For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, **turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ***” Jude 1:4. Notice what these “*ungodly men*” who had “*crept in (into the church) unawares*” did: they “**turned the grace of God into lasciviousness.**”

We must understand, no one can “*change*” the grace of God into something it is not, but if they can “*change*” the “*definition*” of the word “*grace,*” they have changed the doctrine of grace. If the definition is changed, every time the people read or hear the word “*grace,*” they hear and understand something that is not true. This has been the adversary's tactic for thousands of years. He cannot change God, so he changes the people's image of God. He cannot change the truth, so he changes the peoples understanding of that truth. He so completely twists and perverts it until the people hear and believe something that is totally opposite of the truth.

The Apostle Paul dealt with this matter of “change” in the first chapter of Romans concerning Old Testament Israel. They were God's chosen people, but they **“changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man...”** Romans 1:23, and God **“gave them up to uncleanness”** verse 24. Next, they **“changed the truth of God into a lie”** Romans 1:25, and God **“gave them up to vile affections”** verse 26. No one can be **“clean and pure”** who serve a **“corruptible god.”** Neither can they **“keep themselves”** who believe a lie to be the truth of God. That Old Testament people became morally corrupted and perverted because they had corrupted the image of God and perverted the truth of God. Those who do the same in this day will fare no better. Need we wonder further about the immorality and perversion of America’s culture? The fault lies at the house of God, in the erroneous understanding of “the grace of God” which is being preached.

Jude tells us that ungodly men **“turned the grace of God into lasciviousness”** in his generation Jude 1:4. Grace is not a **“lascivious doctrine.”** Strong's concordance defines **“lasciviousness”** as **“licentiousness,”** which is defined in the **“New Century Dictionary”** as **“Characterized by or using license; going beyond customary or proper bounds or limits; disregarding commonly accepted rules or principles... esp. unrestrained by law or morality; lawless; immoral; sensually unbridled; libertine; lewd.”**

The sixth chapter of Romans begins with a hypothetical question; **“Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?”** This is a question which was framed by those **“licentious believers.”** They believed grace was a **“license”** to continue in sin; in fact, they believed **“the more we sin, the more grace is given.”** That is what Jude spoke of as **“grace turned into lasciviousness.”** A second **“hypothetical question”** of the same kind is asked in the fifteenth verse; **“Shall we sin because we are not under the law, but under grace?”** These so-called **“believers”** loved sin. They were looking to **“grace”** for permission to continue in sin. They believed grace was a **“covering”** for their sin. Today, they believe **“we are all**

sinners, must sin every day, and will be sinners as long as we live in this body.” All who believe such doctrine are the victims of those who have *“turned the grace of our God into lasciviousness.”*

The scripture says those who are *“justified by faith”* through Jesus Christ also *“...have access by faith into **this grace wherein we stand.**”* Romans 5:2. Let me give a scriptural definition of *“grace”* through the various ways the Apostle Paul used the word. First it must be understood that grace is never given to unrepentant sinners. Paul said, *“...sin shall not have dominion over you, because you are not under the law, but under grace”* Romans 6:14. There is no sinner *“under grace,”* because sin has no dominion over those who are *“under grace.”* Peter said that God *“...resisteth the proud and giveth grace to the humble”* 1 Peter 5:5. If grace were given to sinners, then certainly it would be given to the proud also. In the following verses we will see *“this grace”* in Paul’s experience.

1. It is *“grace wherein we stand”* Romans 5:2. *“By whom also we have access by faith into **this grace wherein we stand.**”* Many believe grace is for those who *“fall.”* I have heard it said that grace is a “safety net” so when a person *“falls”* into sin, grace catches them so they can't fall into Hell.

2. It is *“grace whereby we serve God acceptably”* Hebrews 12:28-29. *“Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. For our God is a consuming fire.”* We are told *“It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God”* Hebrews 10:31. God has never changed. He hates sin. The Law of Moses was given to destroy sinners, but Christ came into the world to destroy sin. Under the Law of Moses, God was a *“consuming fire”* Deuteronomy 4:24. Under the covenant of grace, God is still a *“consuming fire”* Hebrews 12:29, but grace is given to the believer *“whereby we may serve God acceptable with reverence and godly fear.”*

3. Grace is given to *“labor more abundantly”* 1 Corinthians 15:10. *“But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which*

was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.” Everything Paul was is the product of the grace of God. What was he? He was the greatest of all the apostles, though he viewed himself as “*not worthy to be called an apostle.*” Even though he “*laboured more abundantly than they all,*” he disclaimed the honor, saying, “*yet not I, but the grace of God, which was with me.*”

Those who believe “*grace*” is a “*license to sin*” would rather identify with the struggling man in the seventh chapter of Romans who said, “*Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me*” Romans 7:20. This man was indeed a “*wretched man*” Romans 7:24, because he was a “*slave to sin*” while trusting in the Law of Moses. His struggle, however, was not with the Law of Moses, which he kept “*blameless*” Philippians 3:6, but with the “*tenth commandment*” of the Law of God, which says, “*Thou shalt not covet...*” Exodus 20:17. This is the only commandment that discovers the condition of our heart. The condition of the man in the seventh chapter of Romans is expressed in the language of slavery; “*For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I*” Romans 7:15. He was not a man under grace, instead, he was a man under the law and “*sold under sin*” Romans 7:14. He was not a man who was “*alive unto God*” Romans 6:11; he was spiritually a dead man, slain by sin and the law. “*For sin, taking occasion by the commandment (the 10th commandment), deceived me, and by it slew me*” Romans 7:11.

This “*man*” was Saul of Tarsus before He was converted to Jesus on the Damascus Road Acts 9:1-6. His “*Romans seven experience*” convinced him he was a sinner in need of a savior, thus his cry, “*who shall deliver me...*” Romans 7:24. This man was not the Apostle Paul. To the contrary, Paul's testimony was “*I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead*”

in vain” Galatians 2:20-21. In all his successes Paul testified, “**yet not I, but Christ...**,” and, “**yet not I, but the grace of God.**” In all his persecutions, tribulations, and buffetings, he found these words of Jesus to be faithful and true, “**My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness**” II Corinthians 12:9.

The Grace that Came to Us

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

Several of the Old Testament prophets began seeing things in visions from the LORD that absolutely amazed them. Isaiah in particular testified to seeing a “*New Jerusalem.*” God said to him, “*Be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy*” Isaiah 65:18. Isaiah’s entire ministry was a warning to Jerusalem of pending destruction to come. Intermittent among his visions of judgment, however, were visions of Jerusalem as “*the city of righteousness, the faithful city*” Isaiah 1:26. Of that city, Isaiah said, “*Thy people also shall be all righteous...*” Isaiah 60:21, “*...they shall call them, The holy people, The redeemed of the LORD: and thou shalt be called, Sought out, A city not forsaken*” Isaiah 62:12.

Ezekiel saw visions of a river of life, flowing from the house of God, which brought healing and life to everything it touched Ezekiel 47:9

David wrote a most graphic description of the sufferings of Christ in his 22nd Psalm, which he concluded with this observation: “*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.*” Psalms 22:30-31.

Notice in the text above that it is our salvation the prophets saw in their visions from the LORD. They “*enquired and searched diligently*” into the things they saw, and the apostle Peter said they prophesied of “**the grace that should come unto you.**”

“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.” I Peter 1:11

“What is this? When shall this be ...and what manner of time will it be?” These questions filled the hearts and minds of the prophets who were visited by such visions of “grace and glory to come.” In all recorded history, there had never been a “city of righteousness” or a people who by nature were a “holy people.” The children of Israel could have been this if they had not refused the voice of God at Sinai Exodus 19:5-6, but their history became one of backsliding and idolatry. The prophets were seeing what God predestined man to be when He said in the beginning, *“Let us make man in our image, after our likeness...”* Genesis 1:26. Their visions were not of things past, however, but of things which were yet to come.

Consider that Peter said it was *“the Spirit of Christ”* in the prophets who *“testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.”* The “Spirit of Christ” was *“the Word of the LORD”* which continually came to the Old Testament prophets of God. Peter said it was *“the Spirit of Christ”* who foretold *“the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that would follow.”* That “glory” was a *“New Creation”* and a *“New Jerusalem,”* which came into existence in the same moment God raised Jesus Christ from the dead, and was first manifested on the Day of Pentecost.

“Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.” I Peter 1:12

The “glory” which followed “the sufferings of Christ” was such the angels of God desired to look into. In redemption, man is given a place above the angels and just “a little lower than God.” The prophets saw this promise of a “glorious new creation” and grasped it for themselves, and for Jerusalem of

their day. It was such that God had to reveal to the prophets, it was *“not unto themselves, but **unto us** they did minister these things.”* Who is the “us” which Peter spoke of? There can be but one answer. He did not speak of the restoration of *“Jerusalem which now is”* Galatians 4:25, but of the creation of *“Jerusalem which is above, which is the mother of us all”* Galatians 4:26. We are those who have been *“redeemed unto God”* by the blood of Christ, *“out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation”* Revelation 5:9. This speaks of the church of Jesus Christ, which is *“...neither Jew nor Greek ...neither bond nor free ...neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus”* Galatians 3:28. We are *“made unto our God (a kingdom of priests Exodus 19:6) and we shall reign on the earth”* Revelation 5:10.

The Wonderful Mystery of Grace

*“For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: How that by revelation he made known unto me **the mystery**; (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) **Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:**”* Ephesians 3:1-6

The apostle Paul spoke of a *“mystery,”* which for fifteen hundred years had been hidden from common knowledge by the Law of Moses, but was *“now revealed to the holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit.”* The revelation of the mystery is incredibly simple, but until this day a vast multitude of religious “scholars” remain blinded to it. From the day God gave promise to *“Abraham and his seed,”* the mystery which the children of Israel could not see, was that both Jews and Gentiles would be *“fellowheirs and of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel.”* When God *“swore by Himself to Abraham”* Genesis 22:16-18, He concluded, *“And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed”* verse 18. The transgression

of the children of Israel at Sinai *Exodus 20:19*, and the “*Law of Moses*” which was “*added because of transgressions*” *Galatians 3:19*, became a “*middle wall of partition*” *Ephesians 2:14* between Jews and Gentiles, which had to be “*abolished in His flesh*” through the death of Christ on the cross. Not even the apostles of Christ understood this until it was first revealed to Saul of Tarsus, about three years after his conversion to Jesus.

“Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power. 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 3:7-8*

Paul viewed his entire ministry as a “*gift of the grace of God.*” He gives three reasons for the grace which was given to him. First, he was to “*preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.*” To “*preach among the Gentiles*” is one thing, but to preach “*the unsearchable riches of Christ*” is something else altogether. Many have preached to the heathen in every part of the world and are very dedicated to the task that is before them, but have nothing but good works to give to the people. Paul, in preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ, brought the unsearchable riches of Christ to as many as believed. He brought a gospel that would make its believer “*free from sin*” *Romans 6:7, 18, 22*. Earlier in this third chapter of *Ephesians* Paul had called it “***the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward***” *Ephesians 3:2*. According to the grace of God which was given to him, Paul was a “*steward*” over the riches of Christ to distribute to the people through preaching the gospel of Christ.

The Fellowship of the Mystery

“And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ.” *Ephesians 3:9*

Grace was given to Paul, not only to “*preach*” the gospel, but, as he said in the ninth verse, “***to make all men see what is***

the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God.” Paul tells what is the “*fellowship of the mystery*” that men are to see; it is “**Christ in you, the hope of glory**” Colossians 1:27. Grace is given to a child of God as a guarantee that Christ will not only be preached but He will also be seen and “*admired in all them that believe*” II Thessalonians 2:10. When Paul preached the gospel, the people not only heard a message, they saw the message. He said they would “*see*” the fellowship of the mystery. Words mean nothing when they are not backed up by life. The lost and perishing world must see “Christ in you” if they are ever to believe. That is what grace is given for.

“To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God...” Ephesians 3:10

The intention of God concerning His grace is revealed in these few words. Not only would the entire unbelieving world see Christ in His people, but even the angels of heaven would see something they had not seen since the transgression of Adam. They would see Christ in His people and thus understand the “*manifold wisdom of God*” in Christ's suffering the horrible death of the cross. The “*principalities and powers in heavenly places*” in this text are the angels of God. The “*wisdom of God*” is “*Christ crucified*” I Corinthians 1:23-24. Peter said the prophets of old told of “**the grace that would come to us**” I Peter 1:10 when they foretold the “*sufferings of Christ and the glory that would follow*” verse 11.

Peter said these were things the “*angels desire to look into*” I Peter 1:12. They could by no means understand why Christ, who was eternally “*with God and was God*” John 1:1, would become a man to suffer and die the horrible death of the cross at the hands of sinners, but now they understand when they see the grace and glory of God manifest in the children of God. They see, and they marvel at the wisdom of God in “*Christ-crucified.*”

Certainly the church of the 21st century does not qualify with its continual confession, “*We are all sinners! We sin every day!*”

*We will continue to sin as long as we live in a body of flesh.” To this, the apostle Paul responds, “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and **the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me”** Galatians 2:20.*

The Glory of the Only Begotten

“And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth... And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.” John 1:14, 16

In describing the “*glory as of the only begotten of the Father,*” the Apostle John could only say He was “*full of grace and truth.*” There was nothing ever seen or known by fallen man that could compare to “*the glory of the only begotten.*” The apostle John, however, described His glory as the fullness of “*grace and truth.*” He was the Son of God, and everything men saw of Him was the manifestation of grace and truth, which He was full of. When we see the power and glory of verse fourteen, we are ready for the truth of the sixteenth verse:

“And of His fullness have all we received, and grace for grace.” Verse 16

Surely every child of God that has been saved any length of time has heard that we are “*heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ* Romans 8:17. Now, John tells the gospel believer, “*We have received of His fullness.*” We have not received His fullness, but we have received “*of*” His fullness. John concludes the thought with “*and grace for grace.*” Everything the world saw of Jesus was a product of the grace He was full of. The wonderful truth is, there is no grace in Jesus Christ which is not given to us who believe. It is “*grace for grace.*” Oh what amazing grace. It is “*grace wherein we stand.*” It is “*grace whereby we serve acceptably.*” It is “*grace to labor more abundantly.*” It is “*grace sufficient for every trial or tribulation.*” It is “*grace to minister Christ to a lost world.*” It is the “*grace*” of “*Christ in you.*” It is such

“*grace*” that the angels stand in amazement. It is “*grace wherein we rejoice.*” It is “**Amazing Grace.**”

Rejoicing in Hope

“...*we have access by faith into **this grace** wherein we stand and rejoice in hope of the glory of God*” Romans 5:2.

Every believer, having by faith accessed “this grace” has both the promise and the expectation of the glory of God. Understand however, that “this grace” is “the grace” which the prophets prophesied would “come to us.” It is our “salvation,” and “our salvation” is nothing less than that which was foretold by the prophets. It is what Paul called “*so great salvation*” Hebrews 2:3 in his epistle to the Hebrews. This is certainly reason for rejoicing, because we have received the “*hope (expectation) of the glory of God.*” For those who truly stand in grace and “*rejoice in hope of the glory of God,*” there is another “*grace*” found in verse three.

“*And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience....*” Romans 5:3

The word “*glory*” in this verse was translated from the same Greek word that was translated “*rejoice*” in the previous verse. What a wonderful “*grace*” God has given us: “***We rejoice in tribulations also.***” I do believe this must be the surest sign of true rejoicing in Jesus. It does not cease in the midst of a test or a trial. Listen to what Peter said about the Gentile Christians in the midst of their great persecution; “*Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. **Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations***” I Peter 1:5-6.

There may be times of “*heaviness*” because of multiple tests and fiery trials, but “*rejoicing that our names are written in heaven*” is still reason to rejoice. We are citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem. We are not of this world, and we are the children of His love. Two verses later, Peter speaks of those who are in fiery trials; “*Whom having not seen, ye love (they*

had never seen Jesus in the flesh); *in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory*” I Peter 1:8.

“And patience, experience; and experience, hope: And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.” Romans 5:4-5

The first example of rejoicing was to “*rejoice in hope of the glory of God.*” The second example is to “*rejoice in tribulations also.*” Notice the end result of rejoicing in tribulations is to bring the believer back to hope; “*...and hope maketh not ashamed.*” The one who rejoices “*in tribulations also*” is the one who finally rejoices in the “*glory of God.*” They will “*rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.*” Paul said, “*tribulation worketh patience, and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts...*” I tell you, this wonderful salvation is a salvation to rejoice over.

The third reason Paul gives for rejoicing is found in the eleventh verse: “*And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement*” Romans 5:11. The word “*joy*” in this verse is also translated from the same Greek word used for rejoicing in the second verse. “*We also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.*” We who believe have received “*the atonement;*” Oh what cause for rejoicing.

This verse is the only place the word “*atonement*” is used in the New Testament. It is an English word which was coined by William Tyndale when he gave us his translation of the scriptures. The Greek word which he translated as “*atonement*” is “*katallage,*” which properly means “*exchange,*” but was commonly translated as “*reconciliation.*” Tyndale, in an effort to give us a word to explain what reconciliation actually is, connected the English word “*at*” with “*one,*” and

added the suffix “ment,” giving us “at-one-ment,” or the new word “atonement.”

The King James translators erred when they used the word “atonement” in the Old Testament as a translation for the Hebrew word, “*kaphar*,” which means “*to cover*.” It is from the use of the word “*atonement*” in the Old Testament that many have erroneously believed that the blood of Jesus “*covers*” sins. We must remember that it was the shedding of the blood of animals that made a covering for sins, which made it necessary that a better sacrifice of holy blood must be offered to take away sin. The apostle Paul said, “*For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should **take away sins***” Hebrews 10:4. It was necessary for Christ to come into the world as “*the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world*” John 1:29.

The apostle John said, “*We know He was manifested (incarnated) to take away our sins...*” I John 3:5. The apostle Paul explained it this way, “*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***” Romans 8:3. We sing the old song, “*He took my sin away, He took my sin away, He keeps me singing day by day; I'm so glad He took my sin away. He took my sin away.*” Oh, what wonderful reason for rejoicing, “*He took my sin away.*” The law could not do it, but Jesus Christ did; “***He took my sin away.***”

Remember, it is not a “*covering*” we have received; it is an “*exchange*.” And again, what cause for rejoicing it is, that “***He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him***” II Corinthians 5:21. He bore our sin to the cross, and we bear His righteousness unto life eternal. That is the “*exchange*” that was made at Calvary through death and resurrection *with* Christ. It is our “*atonement*,” and we are “*made one*” with Christ. Paul explained it perfectly to the Romans; “***For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall***

many be made righteous” Romans 5:19. Jesus obeyed the Father, and was “*obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.*” We have received the “*exchange.*” We have been made righteous, with no room for boasting, because it is “*through our Lord Jesus Christ.*” This is our justification, which we received “*by faith.*” Oh what rejoicing we have in Jesus Christ!

Justified by His Blood

*“For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. **Much more then, being now justified by his blood,** we shall be saved from wrath through him.”* Romans 5:6-9

The fourth chapter of Romans was written to show “*what Abraham found*” Romans 4:1 concerning justification. He discovered once and for all that justification cannot be by our works, but must be received “*by grace, through faith*” Ephesians 2:8. There is something, however, that Abraham did not find in his day. He never found the blood of a sacrifice that could “*take away sins*” Hebrews 10:4. In this text, the apostle Paul makes it abundantly clear that we have received something “*much more*” than that which Abraham received, which is “*...being now justified by His blood.*”

Let’s look again at the first verse of this chapter; “*Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ*” Romans 5:1. Abraham had “*peace with God*” because he not only “*believed God*” Genesis 15:6, but he also “*obeyed God*” Hebrews 11:8. We have “*peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*” Paul spoke of this to the Colossians; “*And, having made peace through the blood of his cross...*” Colossians 1:20. He said to the Ephesians; “*For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in*

ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace” Ephesians 2:14-15; The “*law of commandments contained in ordinances*” (the Law of Moses), which were “*against us*” Colossians 2:14, had to be “abolished” before man could have “peace with God.” Our “peace” is through Jesus Christ our Lord. Abraham did not have such “peace,” even when he was “justified by faith.”

“Much more then, being now justified by his blood...” Hebrews 5:9. Can you see that being “*justified by His (Christ’s) blood*” in verse 9 is “*much more*” than being “justified by faith” as experienced by Abraham? The words “*being now*” in this verse speak of “this present time” as compared to those times before Christ died for us. The term, “***being now justified by His blood,***” brings understanding and conclusion to the preceding verses;

*“For when we were yet without strength, in due time **Christ died for the ungodly.**”* Romans 5:6

*“God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, **Christ died for us.**”* Romans 5:8

The “Better Thing”

*“And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: **God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.**”* Hebrews 11:39:40

With these words, the apostle Paul brought his conclusion to the famous “faith chapter” in his epistle to the Hebrews. Some have called the eleventh chapter of Hebrews “The Faith Hall of Fame.” While describing the greatness of those men and women who lived and believed God over a period of four thousand years from Adam, Paul’s purpose was not to “glorify” them, or even to give them to us as an example. Instead, he spoke to us about the “*better thing*” which God has provided for us. He confirms the words of Jesus, who when speaking of the greatness of John the Baptist, said “*Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet*

than John the Baptist: but he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he” Luke 7:28.

Can you see the “*better thing*” which has come to us when Christ died for us? It cannot be that the traditional description of “justification by faith” is true. Orthodoxy tells us we are “justified” and nothing has changed. Perhaps that was true in Abraham and the mighty men and women of faith in the Old Testament. The “secret” to their exploits was that they not only “believed God,” but they also “obeyed God.” It is true that Abraham plotted with Sarah to deceive the king of Egypt Genesis 12:11-13, but in those who are “*justified by His blood,*” there is no deception. It is also true that David, who as a young man was “*a man after God’s own heart,*” later committed adultery with Bathsheba, and plotted the death of her husband, but David was neither justified by faith nor a man after God’s own heart when he was in this condition. This horrible example of David cannot be an excuse for us to do the same. He did not have the “*better thing*” which God has provided for us. David had only the blood of animals to cover his sin, which he did not offer Psalms 51:16, because he wanted something from God which the blood of animals could not give.

“Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice. Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.” Psalms 51:7-10

These things I have highlighted are things David could not receive, because Christ had not yet come, and His holy blood was not yet offered. He could not “purge” himself; he could not “wash himself” inside; and he could not “create” in himself a clean heart. David was pleading for things he could never have; things which are “freely given” to everyone who knows the truth, believes the truth, and trusts in Christ, “*who loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood*” Revelation 1:5.

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