

“The Grace of Christ”

*“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. 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**....” Jude 1:4*

Only twenty-four years after the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the apostle Paul wrote to the Galatians, saying, “I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into **the grace of Christ** unto another gospel: Which is not another; **but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ**” Galatians 1:6-7. Ten years later, Paul warned the elders at Ephesus, “For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock” Acts 20:29. About this same time, Jude warned that ungodly men had “crept in unawares” and were “turning the grace of God into lasciviousness.” He exhorted us to “earnestly contend for **the faith** which was once delivered to the saints.” The “church” was in great danger of losing “the gospel faith” which it had received from the original apostles of Jesus Christ. The message of “God’s grace” was quickly being transformed into a lascivious doctrine by false teachers, whom the apostle John identified as “many antichrists” I John 2:18.

The church of the 1st century entered into a great “falling away” that lasted for three centuries, and then plunged into twelve hundred years of religious dark ages until the reformation of the 16th century. During the past five hundred years, the “church” has been splintered into many hundreds of factions, and the past one hundred fifty years has given us hundreds of different versions of the bible. Considering these undeniable facts, how can we know what the truth of the gospel is, and in particular, what grace is? If “the grace of our God” was turned into a lascivious doctrine by false teachers 19 centuries ago, who, in all the years since that time, has corrected the error and given us the truth about the grace of our God? The studies which show 68% of the men, and 54% of the pastors in today’s church regularly watch pornography is proof enough that the modern doctrine of grace is not working. How can we know the truth?

The truth that makes its believers “free from sin” Romans 6:7, 18, 22, is clearly presented in the scriptures (KJV). If we will believe what God has said through His “holy men of old” (the apostles and prophets) II Peter 1:21, we will enter into the “glorious liberty” Romans 8:21 and “rest” Hebrews 4:3 of the children of God. To do so, however, we must put aside every philosophy of life and tradition of men to simply trust in Jesus Christ, who “loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood” Revelation 1:5. Consider the following presentations of Grace in the scriptures.

The Grace: “Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, **who 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 1:10-11

God spoke to the prophet Isaiah in visions of “a new heavens and a new earth” Isaiah 65:17 and “a new Jerusalem” verse 18 which He would create. He gave promise to the New Jerusalem, saying, “Thy people also shall be all righteous...” Isaiah 60:21, and “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. In Psalms 22, David wrote the most perfect description of the sufferings and death of Jesus Christ, and then spoke of “the glory” of a new creation “seed” that would come out of His sufferings. He said, “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.

The prophets searched diligently, “What is this? When shall this be?” When seeing the “New Jerusalem,” whose inhabitants are “all righteous,” and would be called “the holy people, the redeemed of the LORD,” the prophets were seeing our “so great salvation” Hebrews 2:3, which was purchased by the holy blood of Jesus Christ. Peter called it “**The Grace**” that came to us through the sufferings of Christ. It is “the glory that follows.”

This Grace: “By whom also we have access by faith into **this grace wherein we stand.**” Romans 5:2

When Paul used the term “this grace,” he is referring to “the grace” which the Old Testament prophets prophesied of. It is “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. Such teaching comes out of the doctrine of lascivious grace. Paul said, “Sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace” Romans 6:14.

Grace to serve God acceptably: “... let us have grace, whereby we may **serve God acceptably** with reverence and godly fear. For our God is a consuming fire.” Hebrews 12:28-29

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.”

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Grace to labor more abundantly: *"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."* I Corinthians 15:10

Everything Paul was, and everything he did was the product of the grace of God. What was he? He was the greatest of all the apostles, but he viewed himself as *"the least of the apostles"* I Corinthians 15:9. 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."* The grace of God had taken the *"chief of sinners"* I Timothy 1:15 and transformed him into the greatest of the apostles.

Grace for ministry: *"That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel: Where of I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power."* Ephesians 3:6-7

Saul of Tarsus was given perhaps the greatest charge ever given to a man soon after God saved him. The promise of God to Abraham was *"In thy seed (Christ Galatians 3:16) shall all the nations (Gentiles) of the earth be blessed"* Genesis 22:18. Paul said, *"That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs...I was made a minister."* Paul was not chosen because of his speaking abilities; the Greeks mocked him, saying *"For his letters, say they, are weighty and powerful; but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible"* II Corinthians 10:10. God chose one who was weak in *"bodily presence"* and *"contemptible"* in speech to *"confound the wise"* and to *"confound the mighty"* I Corinthians 1:27. It should be noticed that grace for ministry was given to Paul *"by the effectual working of His power,"* which speaks of the Holy Ghost.

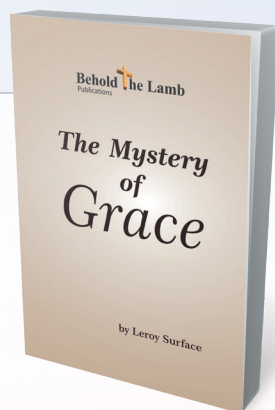
"Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery...." Ephesians 3:8-9

Grace according to the gift of Christ: *"But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ."* Ephesians 4:7

Has God called you to ministry? He will qualify you for whatever He has called you to do. The apostle said, *"by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all..."* I Corinthians 15:10. What was Paul? He was perhaps the greatest of all apostles, because *"His grace which was bestowed on me was not in vain."* In times of great persecution, Jesus said to Paul, *"My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness"* II Corinthians 12:9. The apostle found *"His grace"* to be *"all-sufficient,"* not only in sufferings, but in ministry as well to fulfil the heavenly calling which Christ had given him.

Amazing Grace: Grace does not cover sin. Grace does not blind God to our sin. It does not give us permission to continue in sin Romans 6:1. Amazing grace is that the eternal

Christ, by whom all things were made John 1:3, would become a flesh and blood man, to shed His precious blood and die the horrible death of the cross as *"a lamb without blemish or spot"* I Peter 1:19, to *"take away the sin of the world"* John 1:29. This is indeed *"unmerited favor"* and *"amazing grace."* This is where *"God so loved the world..."* John 3:16. This is where Christ *"loved us, and gave himself for us"* Galatians 2:20; where He *"...washed us from our sins in His own blood"* Revelation 1:5. Grace is not given to sinners, but to believers. The sinner who believes is made free from sin Romans 6:7, 18, 22 and delivered from the Law Romans 7:6 *"to serve the living God"* Hebrews 9:14. The experience of those who are *"under grace"* is *"righteous, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost"* Romans 14:17. Those who *"continue in sin"* and believe *"grace"* has them covered are the true victims of the doctrine of *"lascivious grace."* They should understand, there will be no *"unmerited favor"* when we stand before Christ to give account of the deeds we have done in our body. The apostle Paul said of that day, *"Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men"* II Corinthians 5:11. Our sincere prayer is that the truth in this short message will persuade many.



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