

Why Grace is Given

"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, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." Ephesians 3:8-11

In the passage above, the Apostle Paul list three things the grace of God was given to accomplish in him. Paul describes **the first reason** he received grace, saying, *"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

Peter described the **"unsearchable riches of Christ"** as *"the salvation"* that Christ brought to us through His sufferings and death on the cross. He said the prophets of the Old Testament saw this salvation afar off, and called it **"the grace that should come unto you"** I Peter 1:10. They had heard from "the Spirit of Christ which was in them" verse 11 of **"the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow"** I Peter 1:11.

Notice first of all, the prophets of old spoke of our great salvation as *"the grace"* that would come to us through *"the sufferings of Christ."* If Christ had only *"taken our punishment,"* perhaps grace would be what the majority believe today, only *"a covering for sins."* Consider, however, that *"the grace"* which was seen by the prophets was also *"the glory"* that would come after Christ died and rose again. It is would be easy for us to believe *"the glory which should follow"* was that which was manifested on the Day of Pentecost, but it is so much more. It is the *"glory"* of a *"New Creation"* II Corinthians 5:17, *"created in Christ Jesus"* Ephesians 2:10. It is a people such as has never been seen since the day Adam disobeyed God and brought sin into the world. They are *"freed from sin"* Romans 6:7, 18, 22, and they *"abide in Christ"* and *"do not sin"* I John 3:5-6, 9.

For over nineteen hundred years since Jude warned that *"the grace of God"* had been *"turned into lasciviousness"* Jude 1:4, the vast majority of the church has been confused concerning what *"grace"* is. Most have been taught that grace is given to cover sins so God could take sinners to heaven. What a horrible thought to those who have received *"the love of the truth"* II Thessalonians 2:10-11. Paul said the grace of God was given to him to *"preach among the Gentiles (every nation) the unsearchable riches of Christ."*

Many false teachers have arisen in this last generation to teach that the *"unsearchable riches of Christ"* are manifested as great prosperity in *"the things of this world."* The Apostle John said, *"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him"* I John 2:15.

The second reason Paul received grace was *"...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

The gospel of Jesus Christ must not only be "preached" in all the world, but it must also be "seen" in those who preach it, as well as in those who believe it. Notice in this verse Paul was given **"grace ...to make all men see"** something that had been *"hid in God"* since *"the beginning of the world."* The *"beginning of the world"* does not speak of the creation of the heavens and earth, but rather it speaks of the beginning of *"this present evil world"* Galatians 1:4, which began with the disobedience of Adam and the entrance of sin. God created man in His own image and likeness, but man *"in the image and likeness of God"* was never seen from the time Adam fell until Christ came into the world. There was a four thousand year period from the fall of Adam until the birth of Jesus Christ in which the *"eternal purpose"* Ephesians 8:11 was *"hidden in God"* until Christ came. The Apostle Paul spoke to Timothy of the *"eternal purpose"* when he tells us God *"... hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ..."* II Timothy 1:9-10.

Notice that Paul again speaks of *"before the world began,"* which *"began"* with the entrance of sin. He told us God's *"purpose and grace ...was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began."* God's *"purpose and grace"* is what God created man to be, *"in His own image and likeness."* If there is any question about what God's *"purpose and grace"* is for the children of God, Paul said it was *"made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ."* If you have any question about what God's *"eternal purpose"* for man is, look to Jesus.

It is one thing for the preacher to point the people to Jesus, which we must all do. Far more effective, however, is for the preacher who preaches Christ to be a manifestation of Christ. Paul said, *"Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God"* Corinthians 4:1-2. Notice he was willing to *"commend himself to every man's conscience in the sight of God."*

Jesus said to the unbelieving Jews, *"Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?"* John 8:46. The Jews were forever trying to prove Jesus was a sinner. Why do so many modern "theologians" seek to prove the Apostle Paul was a sinner? If he was a sinner, he must have been incredibly self-righteous, and totally unworthy to be believed in anything he said. He said of himself, *"Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe"* I Thessalonians 2:10.

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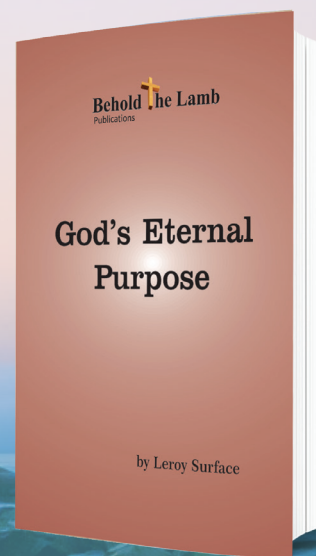
The Apostle Paul was in fact a manifestation of the truth he preached and the Christ he served.

The third reason Paul received grace was ***“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 when giving *“this grace”* Ephesians 3:8 reached into heaven itself. The wording of this verse is somewhat vague and obscure, but in plain language, God intended that the angels in heaven would understand the incarnation of Christ and His death on the cross. Angels are not *“omniscient,”* meaning they do not know all things. Their *“purpose”* from the beginning was to serve those who were *“created in the image and likeness of God.”* With the fall of Adam and the entrance of sin, 1/3rd of the angels joined Lucifer in the rebellion. If Christ died for sin, and those who believe in Him continue in sin, the angels can only believe His death was in vain, that it did absolutely nothing of eternal value. When, however, the angels see the *“glorious church”* Ephesians 5:27, filled with believers who are *“created in the image and likeness of the Son of God,”* they understand the *“manifold wisdom”* of *“Christ crucified.”*

Paul described the church which Christ is the head of, as ***“...his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.”*** Ephesians 1:22-23. I have never seen such a church, but the angels in heaven have. When the world around us sees a weak and sinful church as in the world today, they can only conclude there is nothing to it, and that Jesus’ death accomplished nothing. When Paul described the church as *“His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all,”* he had seen such a church. The *“hundred and twenty”* on the Day of Pentecost were such a church. It was made up of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers, with every member of the body full of the Holy Ghost, and given *“the manifestation of the Spirit”* I Corinthians 12:7. These were from the first day, a people such as had not existed since the day Adam disobeyed God and sin entered into the heart of the man. In fact, the world had never seen such as these hundred and twenty. Adam’s and Eve’s fall took place before their first child was born. Their firstborn son Cain, who murdered his brother Abel, had never seen his mom and dad *“in the image and likeness of God.”* Adam and Eve were bound in chains of total depravity because of the entrance of sin.

This brings us to the *“eternal purpose of God.”* On several occasions Paul referenced God’s *“...eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.”* Ephesians 3:11. The word *“purpose,”* which is used two times in this one verse, was translated from two different Greek words. The first, used in *“eternal purpose”* speaks of God’s *“original intent;”* It is what God *“set forth”* when He said, *“Let us make man in our image, after our likeness”* Genesis 1:26. The second usage is translated from the Greek word *“poieo,”* and speaks of what He *“made”* in Christ Jesus our Lord. What Adam was before entrance of

sin, and what Jesus Christ was in His thirty three years before the cross were both equal to God’s *“eternal purpose.”* The *“new heavens and new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness”* will be populated with a *“new creation”* of people who are *“in the image of the Son of God.”* We who are *“born of God”* are that *“new creation”* right now II Corinthians 5:17. The original creation of man in the image and likeness of God was before the entrance of sin. The *“new creation”* in the image and likeness of God could not exist until after *“the sin”* that entered through Adam’s disobedience, was *“taken away”* by the obedience of Jesus Christ to the death of the cross. When John the Baptist introduced Jesus as *“the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world”* John 1:29, he understood that Christ was sent into the world *“to make an end of sins”* Daniel 9:24-25, which he would do through His death on the cross. Both the *“sin nature”* and the *“Law of Moses”* were nailed to the cross with Christ, and we who believe this and trust in Jesus Christ are *“made free”* John 8:32 from both sin and the Law to serve God in holiness and righteousness Luke 1:68-75.



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