

"WHO ARE YOU, O GREAT MOUNTAIN?...
YOU SHALL BECOME A PLAIN...
WITH SHOUTS
OF

GRACE!

GRACE!

A STUDY IN

GRACE

PARDON



POWER

Pastor Randy Shupe

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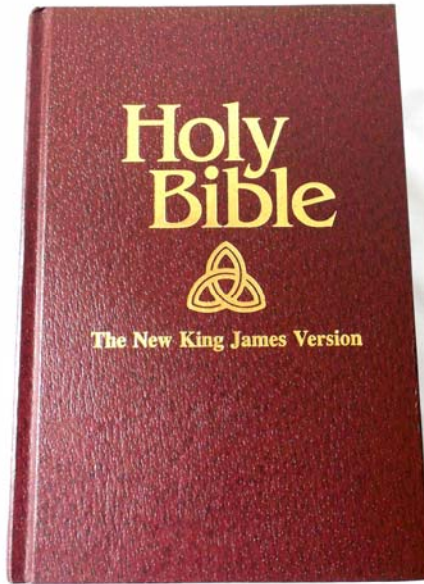
PARDON



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The majority of scripture references quoted in this book are from the New King James Version by Thomas Nelson Publishers.

For some time I have been persuaded that this is the finest English translation of the Bible. My thanks to Thomas Nelson Publishers for this helpful aid to God's people.

Amazing Grace

John Newton

Arr. by E. O. Excell

1. A - maz - ing grace! how sweet the sound, That saved a wretch like me! I
2. 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, And grace my fears re-lieved; How
3. Thro' man - y dan - gers, toils and snares, I have al - read - y come; 'Tis
4. When we've been there ten thousand years, Bright shin - ing as the sun, We've
once was lost, but now am found, Was blind, but now I see.
pre - cious did that grace ap - pear The hour I first be-lieved!
grace hath bro't me safe thus far, And grace will lead me home.
no less days to sing God's praise Than when we first be - gun. A - MEN.

**“AND WITH
GREAT POWER
THE APOSTLES
GAVE WITNESS
TO
THE
RESURRECTION
OF
THE LORD
JESUS,
AND
GREAT GRACE
WAS UPON
THEM ALL.”**

Acts 4:33



**“AND WITH
MANY OTHER
WORDS HE
TESTIFIED AND
EXHORTED THEM,
SAYING,
‘BE SAVED FROM
THIS PERVERSE
GENERATION.’
...AND THEY
CONTINUED
STEADFASTLY
IN THE
APOSTLES
DOCTRINE...”**

Acts 2:40-42

The testimony of the early church recorded in Acts bore a dual testimony of manifesting

GREAT POWER

and

GREAT GRACE

This book is dedicated to the restoration of the apostles doctrinal teaching of grace as it was first preached to the early church in the book of Acts. The theology of the modern-day church is greatly lacking when it comes to the full message of grace. What is being presented today is in reality only half the truth contained in the scriptures pertaining to grace. Grace that pardons sin is well presented, but grace that gives power over sin is not well represented today. However, as we shall see, both pardon and power are the stated objectives of the apostles version of amazing grace.

Paul the apostle, writer of two-thirds of the New Testament epistles, was chosen by God to communicate to all New Testament believers the true grace of God in all its fullness.

Printed below is a such statement from Paul in one flowing sentence. It is a complete expression of the grace of God and what it is meant to accomplish in the life of every born-again believer.



Paul

**“FOR
THE GRACE OF GOD
THAT BRINGS SALVATION
HAS APPEARED TO ALL MEN,
TEACHING US THAT,
DENYING UNGODLINESS
AND WORLDLY LUSTS,
WE SHOULD LIVE SOBERLY,
RIGHTEOUSLY, AND GODLY
IN THE PRESENT AGE,
LOOKING FOR
THE BLESSED HOPE
AND GLORIOUS APPEARING OF
OUR GREAT GOD AND SAVIOR
JESUS CHRIST,
WHO GAVE HIMSELF FOR US,
THAT HE MIGHT REDEEM US
FROM EVERY LAWLESS DEED
AND
PURIFY FOR HIMSELF
HIS OWN SPECIAL PEOPLE,
ZEALOUS FOR
GOOD WORKS.”**

Titus 2:11-14

“...THIS IS THE TRUE GRACE OF GOD IN WHICH YOU STAND.”

1 Peter 5:12

Note that this single flowing sentence opens with an expression of the grace of God that “brings salvation” but ends with a people that are “zealous for good works.” Any grace teaching that does not end up with a people being prepared for good works is not the complete message pertaining to grace!

Of all the doctrinal truths found in the Word of God, grace has the potential to have the most potent effect if we would only properly comprehend and apply it. However, history proves that Satan has been effective in perverting the doctrine of grace. We find ample evidence of Satan's work even among the infant church as expressed by these New Testament writers of scripture:

**"WHAT SHALL WE SAY THEN?
SHALL WE CONTINUE IN SIN
THAT GRACE MAY ABOUND?
CERTAINLY NOT!"**

Rom. 6:1-2



Paul



Jude

**"I FOUND IT NECESSARY TO
WRITE TO YOU EXHORTING YOU
TO CONTEND EARNESTLY FOR
THE FAITH WHICH WAS ONCE
DELIVERED TO THE SAINTS.
FOR CERTAIN MEN HAVE
CREPT IN UNNOTICED...
WHO TURN THE GRACE OF GOD
INTO LICENTIOUSNESS..."**

Jude 3-4

**"BUT MAY
THE GOD OF ALL GRACE,
WHO HAS CALLED US TO
HIS ETERNAL GLORY
BY CHRIST JESUS,
AFTER YOU HAVE
SUFFERED A WHILE,
PERFECT, ESTABLISH,
STRENGTHEN AND SETTLE YOU...
I HAVE WRITTEN TO YOU
BRIEFLY, EXHORTING AND
TESTIFYING THAT THIS IS
THE TRUE GRACE OF GOD
IN WHICH YOU STAND."**

1 Peter 5:10, 12

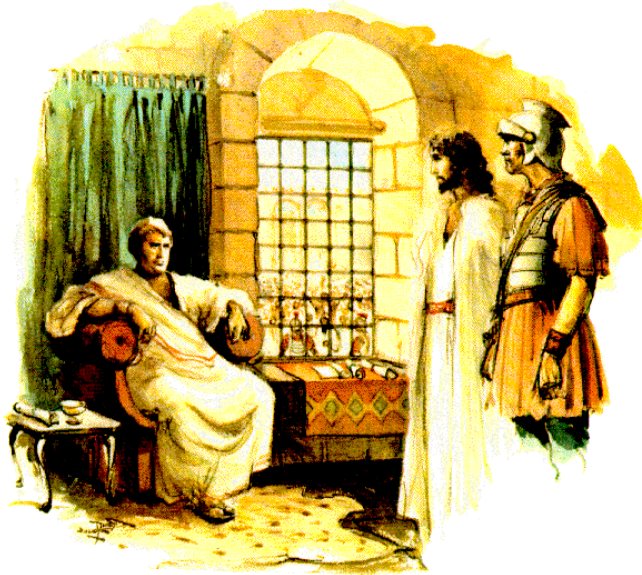


Peter

Obviously, Satan wasted no time in seeking to pervert the teaching of the doctrine of grace. Paul, Jude and Peter quickly recognized what was happening to the presentation of the true grace of God. Do we see such perversion at work in the message of grace in the modern-day church?

**“FOR THE LAW WAS GIVEN THROUGH MOSES,
BUT
GRACE AND TRUTH
CAME THROUGH JESUS CHRIST.”**

John 1:17-18



“WHAT IS TRUTH?”

Jn. 18:38

Pilate did not wait for Jesus to answer this rhetorical question, “What is truth?” Truth personified was standing before Pilate. Truth is Jesus’ middle name as He declared Himself to be, “the way, the truth and the life” (Jn. 14:6). Just as Pilate asked Jesus, “What is truth?” so likewise, we as followers of Jesus, must seek to fully comprehend what is truth. This emphasis on truth is a rampant theme throughout Paul’s writings. Consider:

**“...THE WORD OF THE TRUTH OF THE GOSPEL
WHICH HAS COME TO YOU...AND IS BRINGING FORTH FRUIT...
SINCE THE DAY YOU HEARD AND KNEW
THE GRACE OF GOD IN TRUTH.”**

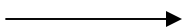
Col.1:5-6

As in the above example, scripture often intertwines the subjects of the grace of God with that of truth. If you have the complete truth, you will also have the fullness of the grace of God. However, half-truths often contain only half the grace of God. You can find pardon for sin apart from also obtaining power over sin. One is the completed work of Christ (pardon), but the other is the work of the Holy Spirit (power). One indeed is a finished work of Christ, but the other is yet to be finished by God’s Spirit at work in us.

**“BEING CONFIDENT OF THIS VERY THING,
THAT HE WHO HAS BEGUN A GOOD WORK IN YOU
WILL COMPLETE IT UNTIL THE DAY OF JESUS CHRIST.”**

Phil. 1:6

This is a very important question for us all to ponder in light of the mandate given to us by the apostle Paul:



"WHAT IS TRUTH?" Jn. 18:38



"BE DILIGENT TO PRESENT YOURSELVES APPROVED TO GOD, A WORKER WHO DOES NOT NEED TO BE ASHAMED, RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD OF TRUTH."

1 Tim.2:15



Part of the "word of truth" which we are called to rightly divide is "the grace of God in truth" (Col. 1:5-6). Previously, (page 7), I showed you that the early church fathers experienced the same problem we are facing today concerning the perversion of the grace of God. It was perverted to the point that God's people were comfortable in continuing in sin that grace may abound.

The first statement I want to make about truth is that it is progressive in revelation. Let us therefore examine the statement, "What is truth" in order that we may properly understand what is grace.

In bible numerics, the number three in scripture depicts "Divine completeness". In my study of God's Word over the last forty years, I have been amazed at the repetitious use of groups of threes in the design work of God. When God designs a plan for man's completeness, it comes in three progressive stages. In my own personal examination of God's Word, I have come to look for, and expect to find this phenomena whenever I am researching things of completeness designed by God. Plans of completeness will come in threes and they will often be progressive unfolding of truths that are each related to the other. Here are some examples of God's plans for Divine completeness:

THE SON, THE SPIRIT, THE FATHER
 SPIRIT, SOUL, BODY
 FAITH, HOPE, LOVE
 PROPHET, PRIEST, KING
 OUTER COURT, HOLY PLACE, HOLIEST OF ALL
 JUSTIFIED, SANCTIFIED, GLORIFIED
 RELATIONSHIP, DISCIPLESHIP, FELLOWSHIP
 THE WAY, THE TRUTH, THE LIFE
 GRACE, WORKS, REWARDS

DIVINELY COMPLETE

There are many more sets of progressive threes in God's word outlining His different plans for Divine completeness. Recently, I did an in-depth DVD series on this very subject which is listed on my website: (PastorRandyShupe.com)

“DIVINELY COMPLETE”
A STUDY OF GOD’S
THREEFOLD CORDS
15 HOURS OF
ILLUSTRATED TEACHINGS
ON 4 DVD DISCS IN ONE ALBUM

“A
 THREEFOLD CORD



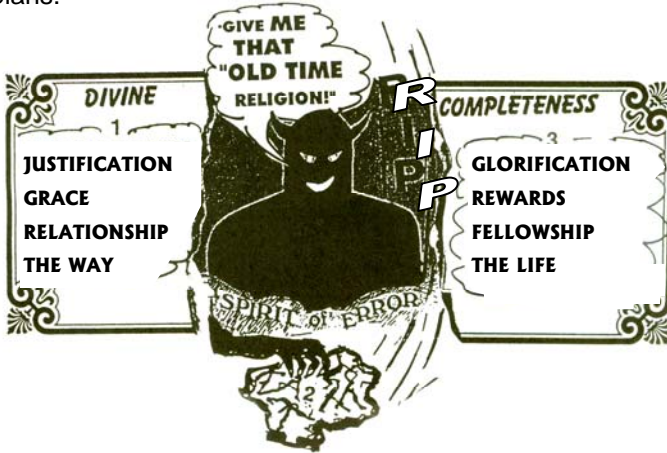
IS NOT
 QUICKLY BROKEN”
 Eccl. 4:12

“WHAT GOD HAS JOINED TOGETHER,
 LET NOT MAN SEPARATE”
 Matt. 19:6



\$25.00

God’s examples of progressive threes in the bible were intended to be embraced as truths that depict a pattern to follow for the Christian. Take for instance Jesus’ title as the way, the truth and the life (Jn. 14:6). The study of the first revelation of Jesus as “the way” should lead you into the next step of seeing Jesus as “the truth.” The capstone truth will be to find Jesus as “the life.” However, the pathway is threefold. You cannot get to the capstone apart from following God’s plan for Divine completeness. Satan is always there to hinder the progress of a Christian. Through “doctrines demons teach” (1 Tim.4:1), Satan will often rip out the middle truths of God’s threefold plans:



For instance, Satan may allow you to find “justification” and perhaps will also allow you to embrace the promise of “glorification” in eternity, but he will seek to rip out of your theology the necessity of embracing a life of “sanctification”, the vital truth needed to obtain glorification (eternal rewards) in the life to come. The pattern from God is threefold: 1. Become justified (“made innocent, righteous”) , 2. Become sanctified (“holy living and conduct”), only then do we 3. qualify to become glorified (“dignify, honor glorify”) in eternity.

If we allow Satan to theologically rip out the middle of God's Divine plans for completeness, we will be left in a state of self-induced deception through half-truths accepted as the whole. Since It is plainly stated that God is not the author of confusion (1 Cor. 14:33), It is obvious Satan is behind such confusion when we consider there are nearly 500 competing denominations all built around the same bible. The church is indeed ear-marked with confusion. This is astounding when you consider that Paul identifies the church with this specific title:

“I WRITE TO YOU SO THAT YOU MAY KNOW HOW YOU OUGHT TO CONDUCT YOURSELVES IN THE HOUSE OF GOD, WHICH IS THE CHURCH OF THE LIVING GOD, THE PILLAR AND GROUND OF THE TRUTH.” 1Tim. 3:15

How significant is that statement? Let us consider that

JESUS IS CALLED THE TRUTH... Jn. 14:6
THE HOLY SPIRIT IS CALLED THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH... Jn. 16:13
THE WORD OF GOD IS CALLED TRUTH... Jn. 17:17
THE LAW OF GOD IS CALLED TRUTH... Psm. 119:142
THE CHURCH IS CALLED THE PILLAR/GROUND OF THE TRUTH... 1 Tim.3:15

Where do you think is Satan's focus? Upon the only variable and vulnerable source of truth listed above-the church of the living God! Historically, the church has always had a problem embracing a full understanding of truth. It behooves us to consider the individual mandate Paul gives to each one of us to:



“BE DILIGENT TO PRESENT YOURSELVES APPROVED TO GOD, A WORKER WHO DOES NOT NEED TO BE ASHAMED, RIGHTLY DIVIDING



THE WORD OF TRUTH.”

1 Tim.2:15

Consider the dismal record that the Word contains of the previous people of God (Israel) pertaining to their interaction with truth:

“THIS IS A NATION THAT DOES NOT OBEY THE VOICE OF THE LORD THEIR GOD NOR RECEIVE CORRECTION. TRUTH HAS PERISHED AND HAS BEEN CUT OFF FROM THE MOUTH.”

Jer. 7:28

“THEY ARE NOT VALIANT FOR THE TRUTH ON THE EARTH... AND WILL NOT SPEAK THE TRUTH.”

Jer. 9:3-5

“NO ONE CALLS FOR JUSTICE, NOR DOES ANY PLEAD FOR TRUTH. THEY TRUST IN EMPTY WORDS AND SPEAK LIES... FOR TRUTH IS FALLEN IN THE STREET...SO TRUTH FAILS, AND HE WHO DEPARTS FROM EVIL MAKES HIMSELF A PREY...”

Ilsa. 59:4, 14-15

Dearest member of the church of the living God: What will God record of us as members of “the pillar and ground of the truth”? I have fearfully pondered if the final testimony God writes of the bulk of the church will be the same as what He has dismally recorded of most of the children of Israel.

If you intend to be found among those whom God will commend for having successfully “rightly divided the word of truth”, then you too must answer the age-old rhetorical question posed by Pilate, “What is truth?” You will need a solid pattern to guide you into assurance that you not only have the truth, but that you are embracing the whole truth. I believe a major problem in the church today lies in the fact that only half the truth is being routinely presented to God’s people as the whole truth. May I demonstrate that statement to you? Below are several passages from the apostle Paul that contain the word “that.” To this teacher, when I see the word “that” in scripture I amplify it in my mind by saying to myself “in order that.” Test yourself with these statements in which Paul will make an opening statement of fact and then follows that statement with a “that” word (in order that). The test is simple: see if you can fill in the blank with the rest of the scripture content that follows the “that.” Ready?

“HE CHOSE US IN HIM BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD **THAT** _____ ?
(Eph. 1:4)

“HE MADE HIM WH KNEW NO SIN TO BE SIN FOR US **THAT** _____ ?
(2 Cor. 5:21)

“HE GAVE HIMSELF FOR OUR SINS **THAT** _____ ?
(Gal. 1:4)

“AND HE DIED FOR ALL **THAT** _____ ?
(2 Cor. 5:15)

“WHO GAVE HIMSELF FOR US **THAT** _____ ?
(Titus 2:14)

“CHRIST LOVED THE CHURCH AND GAVE HIMSELF FOR IT **THAT** _____ ?

AND **THAT** _____ ?

AND **THAT** _____ ?
(Eph. 5:26-27)

“WHO HIMSELF BORE OUR SINS IN HIS OWN BODY ON THE TREE **THAT** _____ ?
(1 Peter 2:24)

Notice how very familiar are the opening statements to us: “He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world...He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us...He gave Himself for our sins...He died for all...who gave Himself for us...Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it... who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree...” If you are like most Christians that I have given this little test to, you failed miserably in filling in the rest of Paul’s words that follow the “that.” Why is this so? Because we have only been fed a selective diet of “half-truths”! Our teachers have only drilled in the opening statements of Paul, but have omitted, ignored, or minimized what follows the “that” (in order that) word. Here is why: All of Paul’s opening statements contain all the **WORDS THAT COMFORT** us theologically. Here is the disturbing fact: All the words that follow “that” are **WORDS THAT CONFRONT** us theologically. However, the whole truth God gave contains a delicate balance of both!

"RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD OF TRUTH"



WORDS THAT **COMFORT:**

"HE CHOSE US IN HIM BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD

"HE MADE HIM WHO KNEW NO SIN TO BE SIN FOR US

"HE GAVE HIMSELF FOR OUR SINS

"AND HE DIED FOR ALL

"WHO GAVE HIMSELF FOR US

"CHRIST LOVED THE CHURCH AND GAVE HIMSELF FOR IT

AND

"WHO HIMSELF BORE OUR SINS IN HIS OWN BODY ON THE TREE,

THAT

THAT

THAT

THAT

THAT

THAT

THAT

THAT

WORDS THAT **CONFRONT:**

WE SHOULD BE HOLY AND WITHOUT BLAME BEFORE HIM IN LOVE."

WE MIGHT BE MADE THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD IN HIM."

HE MIGHT DELIVER US FROM THIS PRESENT EVIL AGE."

THOSE WHO LIVE SHOULD NO LONGER LIVE FOR THEMSELVES, BUT FOR HIM WHO DIED FOR THEM."

HE MIGHT SANCTIFY AND CLEANSE HER BY THE WASHING OF WATER BY THE WORD."

HE MIGHT PRESENT HER TO HIMSELF A GLORIOUS CHURCH, NOT HAVING SPOT OR WRINKLE OR ANY SUCH THING."

SHE SHOULD BE HOLY AND WITHOUT BLEMISH."

WE, HAVING DIED TO SINS, MIGHT LIVE FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS..."

Obviously, Paul (as well as Peter) sought to state the whole counsel of God as depicted in the above doctrinally sound constructed sentences. They were never meant to be altered into stand alone truths. The initial statements convey what God has done for the believer, but the second half (after the "that") contains direct and explicit expressions of what response God expects from the believer who has embraced the initial statements.

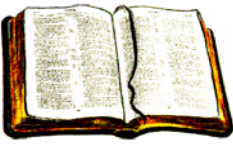
Let me further clarify the distinction between the two columns above:



THE WORDS THAT
COMFORT
ARE ALL STATEMENTS OF
JUSTIFICATION
(MADE INNOCENT, MADE RIGHTEOUS)

THE WORDS THAT
CONFRONT
ARE ALL STATEMENTS OF
SANCTIFICATION
(HOLY CONDUCT, RIGHTEOUS LIVING)

Remember, we considered that the act of **JUSTIFICATION** is intended to lead to acts of **SANCTIFICATION** which will produce **GLORIFICATION** in eternity. If you allow Satan to rip out the need for acts of sanctification such as expressed above by Paul, then you indeed may be justified by the finished work of Christ, but you will not be found sanctified by the ongoing unfinished work of the Holy Spirit. Justification will bring you eternal life, but it is sanctification that produces eternal rewards. Do you want to be among those depicted as "saved yet so as by fire, but suffer loss of reward" for all eternity? (1 Cor. 3:14-15).



WORDS THAT COMFORT



WORDS THAT CONFRONT

“HE CHOSE US IN HIM BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD... **THAT**

“HE MADE HIM WHO KNEW NO SIN TO BE SIN FOR US... **THAT**

“HE GAVE HIMSELF FOR OUR SINS “AND HE DIED FOR ALL... **THAT**

“WHO GAVE HIMSELF FOR US **THAT**

“CHRIST LOVED THE CHURCH AND GAVE HIMSELF FOR IT **THAT**

AND **THAT**

AND **THAT**

“WHO HIMSELF BORE OUR SINS IN HIS OWN BODY ON THE TREE, **THAT**

WE SHOULD BE HOLY AND WITHOUT BLAME BEFORE HIM IN LOVE.”

WE MIGHT BE MADE THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD IN HIM.”

HE MIGHT DELIVER US FROM THIS PRESENT EVIL AGE.”

THOSE WHO LIVE SHOULD NO LONGER LIVE FOR THEMSELVES, BUT FOR HIM WHO DIED FOR THEM.”

HE MIGHT SANCTIFY AND CLEANSE HER BY THE WASHING OF WATER BY THE WORD.”

HE MIGHT PRESENT HER TO HIMSELF A GLORIOUS CHURCH, NOT HAVING SPOT OR WRINKLE OR ANY SUCH THING.”

SHE SHOULD BE HOLY AND WITHOUT BLEMISH.”

WE, HAVING DIED TO SINS, MIGHT LIVE FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS...”

Ponder carefully what is presented above for it constitutes the whole truth. The loose theology of today is one of stopping in mid-sentence and declaring it to be that the whole truth when it is obviously only half the truth stated. Many teachers, and especially so-called grace teachers today, are guilty of quoting only half a verse, namely, the initial statement that contains only words of comfort. Look at the above once again. The initial statements only present what God has done on our behalf. What is left out is what God wants us to do. Why so? Because the remainder does not harmonize with what is being presented as the grace message. Grace that pardons sin is being sold at the expense of grace that empowers the believer to conquer sin. The litmus test of the presentation of half the grace message is easily proven by the wide-spread quotation of Ephesians 2:8-9 purposely divorced from Ephesians 2:10 (the very next verse):

“FOR BY GRACE YOU HAVE BEEN SAVED THROUGH FAITH, AND THAT NOT OF YOURSELVES, IT IS THE GIFT OF GOD, NOT OF WORKS LEST ANYONE SHOULD BOAST.

Eph. 2:8-9

FOR WE ARE HIS WORKMANSHIP, CREATED IN CHRIST JESUS FOR GOOD WORKS, WHICH GOD PREPARED BEFOREHAND THAT WE SHOULD WALK IN THEM.”

Eph. 2:10



THE WORDS THAT COMFORT

THE WORDS THAT CONFRONT



**“FAR TOO MANY CHRISTIANS
SEEK TO CHANGE THE IMAGE OF GOD
RATHER THAN BE CHANGED INTO THE IMAGE OF GOD.”**

A. W. Tozer

God did not ask us to change the truth that He gave us, but rather to become changed by the truth we receive from His Word. Truth is not just to inform us, but to transform us. Jesus reveals two distinct evidences that would mark the believer that embraces the truth:

**“AS HE SPOKE THESE WORDS MANY BELIEVED IN HIM.
THEN JESUS SAID TO THOSE JEWS WHO BELIEVED HIM,
'IF YOU ABIDE IN MY WORD, YOU ARE MY DISCIPLES INDEED.**



JUSTIFICATION
("MADE INNOCENT, RIGHTEOUS
IN GOD'S SIGHT")

SANCTIFICATION
("SET APART TO GOD,
RIGHTEOUS, HOLY CONDUCT")

Remember that Jesus is speaking to "those who believed on Him." Having received forgiveness of sin by the finished work of Christ, they are set free from the penalty of sin that hung over them prior to the new birth. By the justification Jesus provided they are released from the wages of sins committed. Jesus has made them "innocent and righteous" by faith in His substitutionary work on the cross:

**“HE MADE HIM
WHO KNEW NO SIN SIN
TO BE SIN FOR US,
THAT WE MIGHT BECOME
THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD
IN HIM.”**
2 Cor. 5:21

Now Jesus exhorts these believers to "continue in My Word" in order to become His disciples. Jesus has in mind that the truth contained in His Word is going to make His followers free indeed.

In Chapter 17, Jesus now states the end result of embracing truth:

**“SANCTIFY THEM BY YOUR TRUTH.
YOUR WORD IS TRUTH.”**
Jn.17:17

Here we now have the result of truth being stated as becoming "sanctified by truth." That means truth now "sets apart" the believer for a life of holy conduct from the bondage of continuing in sin.



**“I LOOKED FOR THE CHURCH AND IT WAS IN THE WORLD.
I LOOKED FOR THE WORLD AND IT WAS IN THE CHURCH.”**

Leonard Ravenhill

We live in times of great compromise. One man told this great revivalist, “I meet the sinner where he is.” Leonard quickly replied, “Meet them where they are and they will stay where they are.” The message of Christianity is about a call to change. Paul exclaims:

“AND HE DIED FOR ALL, THAT THOSE WHO LIVE SHOULD NO LONGER LIVE FOR THEMSELVES, BUT FOR HIM WHO DIED FOR THEM AND ROSE AGAIN... IF ANYONE IS IN CHRIST, HE IS A NEW CREATION; OLD THINGS HAVE PASSED AWAY, BEHOLD, ALL THINGS HAVE BECOME NEW.”

2 Cor. 5:15,17

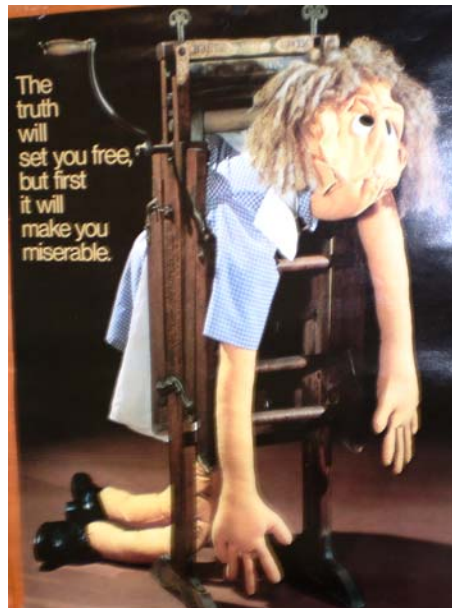
In the very next chapter Paul amplifies what he means by “old things have passed away and all things have become new.” Consider the degree of separation that Paul calls the Christian believer to embrace as new converts to Christ:

“DO NOT BE UNEQUALLY YOKED TOGETHER WITH UNBELIEVERS. FOR WHAT FELLOWSHIP HAS RIGHTEOUSNESS WITH LAWLESSNESS? AND WHAT COMMUNION HAS LIGHT WITH DARKNESS? AND WHAT PART HAS A BELIEVER WITH AN UNBELIEVER? ...WHAT AGREEMENT HAS THE TEMPLE OF GOD WITH IDOLS? FOR YOU ARE THE TEMPLE OF THE LIVING GOD... THEREFORE COME OUT FROM AMONG THEM AND BE SEPARATE SAYS THE LORD. DO NOT TOUCH WHAT IS UNCLEAN!... LET US CLEANSE OURSELVES FROM ALL FILTHINESS OF THE FLESH AND SPIRIT, PERFECTING HOLINESS IN THE FEAR OF GOD.”

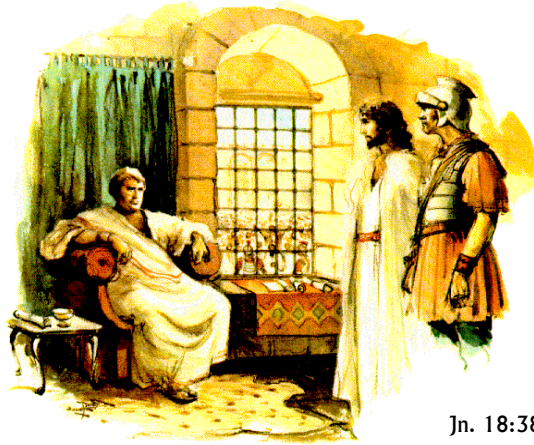
2 Cor. 6:14-17, 7:1 excerpts

I keep this painfully humorous poster in our church bookstore to remind our congregation of the cost of embracing truth: →

Truth that “sets us free” and truth that “sets us apart” calls us to embrace the pain of change. Even the secular world embraces the saying, “no pain-no gain.” Pain in the spiritual realm requires embracing a cross mentality that there is real pain in real change. I remember a sleek sailing slip anchored in the Baltimore inner harbor which proudly bore the name, “Hedonist.” That worldly-minded term implies a life dedicated to the avoidance of pain and the pursuit of pleasure. This is anti-Christian thinking.



A proper response to the rhetorical question:



Jn. 18:38

“WHAT IS TRUTH?”



Jn.8:30-32



**TRUTH
SETS FREE**

JUSTIFICATION

(“MADE INNOCENT, RIGHTEOUS
IN GOD’S SIGHT”)



Jn. 17:17



**TRUTH
SETS APART**

SANCTIFICATION

(“SET APART TO GOD,
RIGHTEOUS, HOLY CONDUCT”)

TRUTH CONTAINS



**WORDS THAT
COMFORT**

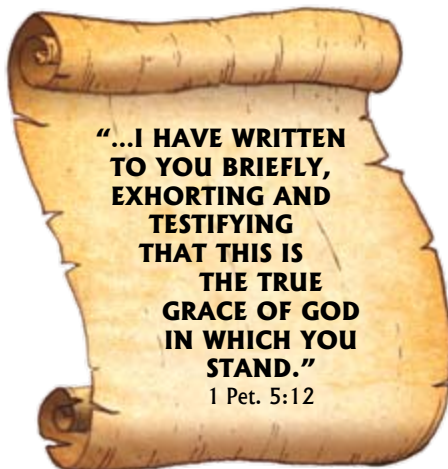
(“WHAT GOD HAS DONE
FOR US”)



**WORDS THAT
CONFRONT**

(“WHAT WE ARE TO DO
FOR GOD”)

If you have understood “What is truth?”, as presented in this introduction then we can proceed to seek to answer properly “What is grace?” The apostle Peter made this bold declaration which we shall seek to unfold as we open chapter one.

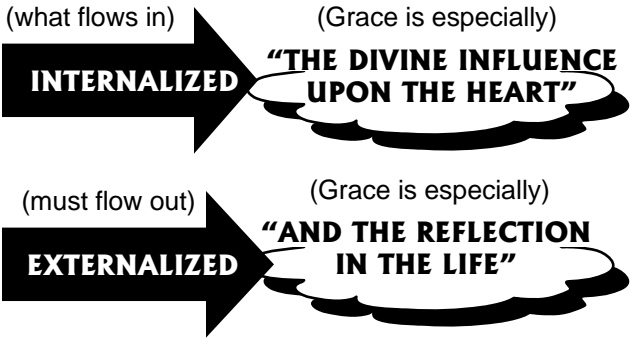


~ CHAPTER ONE ~

In our introductory chapter, we pondered the rhetorical question, "What is truth"? If you fully understand the dualistic answer to that question as portrayed on page 17, let us proceed to yet another question which also requires a good biblical answer, "What is grace"? I believe we all know the typical response is, "Grace is the unmerited favor of God." However, I would like to challenge that answer as being an over-simplification that lacks true biblical definition. It is factual that grace qualifies as a "gift" containing "favor" but lacks the stated emphasis found in the definition of this Greek word, "charis". Here is a direct scan from Strong's Concordance defining this word:

5485. χάρις **charis**, *khar'-ece*; from 5463; *graciousness (as gratifying), of manner or act (abstr. or concr.; lit., fig. or spiritual; espec. the divine influence upon the heart, and its reflection in the life; including gratitude):—acceptable, benefit, favour, gift, grace (-lous), joy liberality, pleasure, thank (-s, -worthy).*

Notice that in addition to being a "gift" bestowing "favor", grace (charis) is **ESPECIALLY** defined in a dualistic meaning that conveys both an internalized and externalized manifestation:



God's grace teachers are guilty of defining grace only as a gift. Look, it is a gift, but grace is far more than that in meaning. Grace is especially meant to impart (1) "Divine influence on the heart" and (2) to accomplish a "reflection in the life." Simply put, what goes inwardly into the heart is to be reflected outwardly in the life:



**NEW
BIRTH**
RECEIVED...

“DIVINE
INFLUENCE
UPON
THE HEART”

GRACE

“ITS
REFLECTION
IN
THE LIFE”

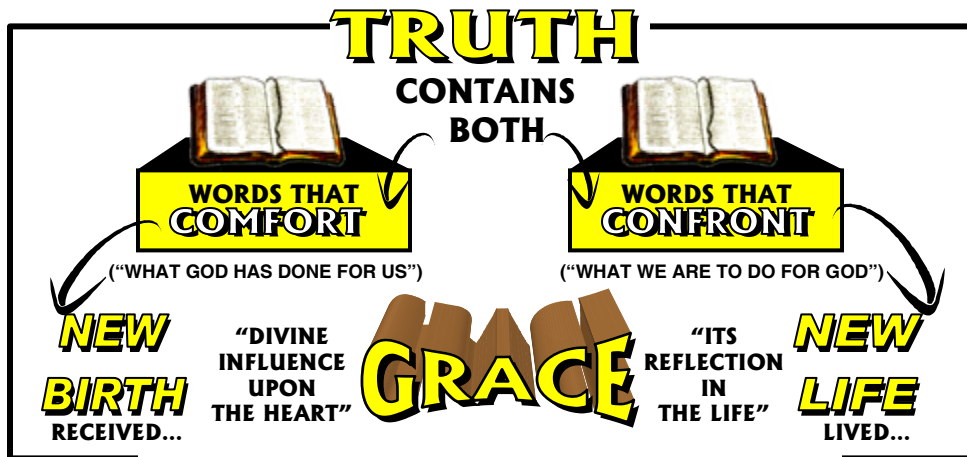
**NEW
LIFE**
LIVED...

“THIS IS THE TRUE GRACE OF GOD IN WHICH YOU STAND”

“AND HE DIED FOR ALL THAT THOSE WHO LIVE SHOULD NO LONGER LIVE FOR THEMSELVES, BUT FOR HIM WHO DIED FOR THEM AND ROSE AGAIN...THEREFORE IF ANYONE IS IN CHRIST, HE IS A NEW CREATION; OLD THINGS HAVE PASSED AWAY; AND BEHOLD, ALL THINGS HAVE BECOME NEW.”

2 Cor. 5:15-17

Considering such passages as above, we can see that God intended that His amazing grace would not only save us, but was also designed to change us. No longer just to live for ourselves, but now to become a changed people that live for the One who died for us. Simply put, the new birth should lead to a new life. The new birth produces the first half of the grace message, “Divine influence of the heart.” However, God is looking for the rest of the grace message to produce a “reflection in the life.” Far too many of God’s people have only been taught half the truth about grace, namely that grace is God’s Divine influence on the heart via the new birth. What about the other half of truth-words that confront how we live?



“THIS IS THE TRUE GRACE OF GOD IN WHICH YOU STAND”

1 Pet. 5:12

In order to rightly divide the word of truth we must cultivate that God’s Word contains a delicate balance of words that comfort and words that confront. The new life is as much a part of the true grace of God as is found in the new birth. In fact, the new birth must lead to a new life lived if we have embraced the whole counsel of God. Otherwise, we rest content with the forgiveness of sin, but ignore the equal mandate to obtain dominion over sin:

“WHAT SHALL WE SAY THEN?
SHALL WE CONTINUE IN SIN THAT GRACE MAY ABOUND?
CERTAINLY NOT! HOW SHALL WE WHO DIED TO SIN
LIVE ANY LONGER IN IT?” Rom. 6:1-2

**NEW
BIRTH
RECEIVED...**

**"DIVINE
INFLUENCE
UPON
THE HEART"**

GRACE

**"ITS
REFLECTION
IN
THE LIFE"**

**NEW
LIFE
LIVED...**

**"WHO ARE YOU, O GREAT MOUNTAIN?...
YOU SHALL BECOME
A PLAIN...
WITH
SHOUTS
OF**

GRACE!

GRACE!

TO IT!"
Zech.4:6-7

Old Testament type and shadow often brings confirmation to New Testament truth. Zechariah prophetically spoke of a double application of grace designed to level the mountains of opposition Satan sets before us:

**"THIS IS THE WORD OF THE LORD TO ZERUBBABEL:
NOT BY MIGHT NOR BY POWER, BUT BY MY SPIRIT',
SAYS THE LORD OF HOSTS. 'WHO ARE YOU, O GREAT MOUNTAIN?'
BEFORE ZERUBBABEL YOU SHALL BECOME AS A PLAIN!
AND HE SHALL BRING FORTH THE CAPSTONE WITH SHOUTS OF
GRACE, GRACE TO IT!"**

Zech. 4:6-7

We need today this double proclamation of God's amazing grace to those things which stand in our way of fulfilling the mandate to become God's holy temple to the Lord. That is what Zerubbabel was building in his day, and it is what God has commissioned His church to become in this age of grace:

**"NOW THEREFORE, YOU ARE NO LONGER STRANGERS AND FOREIGNERS,
BUT FELLOW CITIZENS WITH THE SAINTS AND MEMBERS OF THE HOUSEHOLD
OF GOD. HAVING BEEN BUILT ON THE FOUNDATION OF THE APOSTLES AND
PROPHETS, JESUS CHRIST HIMSELF BEING THE CHIEF CORNERSTONE,
IN WHOM THE WHOLE BUILDING, BEING JOINED TOGETHER,
GROWS INTO A HOLY TEMPLE IN THE LORD,
IN WHOM YOU ALSO ARE BEING BUILT TOGETHER
FOR A HABITATION OF GOD IN THE SPIRIT."**

Eph. 2:19-22

The double proclamation of grace needed to build the temple of the Lord, a habitation fit for God in the Spirit, is this dual manifestation of grace:



**THE
GRACE
OF GOD**



**"FOR BY GRACE YOU HAVE BEEN
SAVED THROUGH FAITH,
AND THAT NOT OF YOURSELVES,
IT IS THE GIFT OF GOD,
NOT OF WORKS
LEST ANYONE SHOULD BOAST.**

Eph. 2:8-9

**FOR WE ARE HIS WORKMANSHIP,
CREATED IN CHRIST JESUS
FOR GOOD WORKS,
WHICH GOD PREPARED
BEFOREHAND THAT
WE SHOULD WALK IN THEM."**

Eph. 2:10

“WHO ARE YOU, O GREAT MOUNTAIN?...
YOU SHALL BECOME
A PLAIN...
WITH
SHOUTS
OF

GRACE!

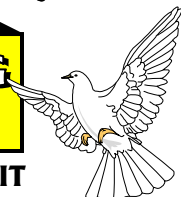
GRACE!

TO IT!”
Zech. 4:6-7



**SAVING
GRACE**

**ENABLING
GRACE**



JESUS THE CHRIST
("THE GRACE OF GOD")

Titus 2:11, Rom. 5:15

THE HOLY SPIRIT
("THE SPIRIT OF GRACE")

Heb. 10:29, Zech. 12:10

**PARDON
OF SIN...**

**POWER
OVER SIN...**



**JESUS CAME AT
PASSOVER**

**THE HOLY SPIRIT CAME AT
PENTECOST**

It is not only Jesus Christ who is called "the grace of God", but the Holy Spirit bears the title of "the Spirit of grace." As the grace of God Jesus brings salvation to all men (Titus 2:11). This is "saving grace" which brings pardon for sin. However, the Holy Spirit imparts "enabling grace" which brings power over sin.

These two events are so significant that God fulfilled them on two great Old Testament Feast Days, Passover and Pentecost. Jesus came to die for our sins as the Passover lamb. The Holy Spirit was sent by the Father on the very day of Pentecost to give the believer power over sin.



Paul

"...WITH REGARD TO A FEAST DAY... SUCH THINGS ARE ONLY A SHADOW OF THINGS TO COME, THEY HAVE ONLY A SYMBOLIC VALUE. THE REALITY, THE SUBSTANCE, THE SOLID FACT OF WHAT IS FORESHADOWED, THE BODY OF IT BELONGS TO CHRIST."
Col. 2:17 Amp.

You say you never heard of Passover or Pentecost depicting the saving grace or enabling grace of God? If so, you are not alone.

The church has long ago replaced these sacred-based holy days with pagan holidays based on nothing but man-made cherished traditions. It is rare to find a grace-based church celebrating the story of Christ with Passover and Pentecost. Sadly, what God foreshadowed in the Feasts of the Old Testament have been overshadowed by the pagan traditions of men such as Christmas and Easter. The apostle Paul however, continued to preach to Gentile believers in the church the spiritual significance of the Feasts of the Lord as depicting the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. Consider his instruction to the Gentile church at Corinth:

THE FEAST OF
PASSOVER



"THEREFORE PURGE OUT THE OLD LEAVEN, THAT YOU MAY BE A NEW LUMP, SINCE YOU ARE TRULY UNLEAVENED. FOR INDEED CHRIST OUR PASSOVER, WAS SACRIFICED FOR US.

THE FEAST OF
UNLEAVENED BREAD



THEREFORE LET US KEEP THE FEAST, NOT WITH OLD LEAVEN, NOR WITH THE LEAVEN OF MALICE AND WICKEDNESS, BUT WITH THE UNLEAVENED BREAD OF SINCERITY AND TRUTH." 1 Cor. 5:7-8

THE FEAST OF
FIRSTFRUITS



"BUT NOW CHRIST IS RISEN FROM THE DEAD, AND HAS BECOME THE FIRSTFRUITS OF THOSE WHO HAVE FALLEN ASLEEP... CHRIST THE FIRSTFRUITS, AFTERWARD THOSE WHO ARE CHRIST'S AT HIS COMING." 1 Cor. 15:20-23

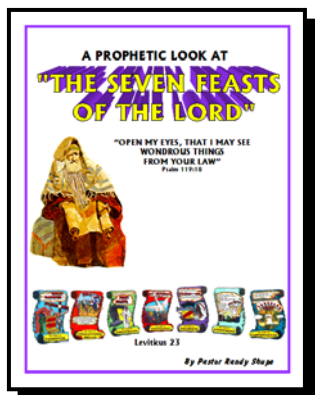
How does the apostle Paul preach the work of Christ to this Gentile church? He uses the type and shadow contained within three of the seven feasts of Leviticus 23 given to the Jews! Why is this not preached to today's Gentile churches? Because tradition has made the Word of God of no effect today as it did in Jesus' day (Mark 7:6-13).



On the south wall of our sanctuary is this 35 foot display of the Seven Feasts of the Lord. I have often taught from it. In fact, we have a DVD series available if you are interested. I know that the details of this picture are not readable. I just want you to see the overall scope of the importance and magnitude of what these Feasts represent. They encompass the scope of the whole New Testament. These Feasts are the Feasts of The Lord, that is, of the Lord Jesus Christ! The best way to look at these Feasts is as one would look at an appointment calendar. This is the Divine appointment calendar of the Lord Jesus Christ. It contains appointments that He has kept on their appointed days (the first four Feasts), and it contains future appointments that remain to be fulfilled (the last three Feasts). Whatever Jesus has done, is doing, or will do, is typified by the seven Feasts of the Lord! Here is a bold statement of fact: There is no significant event spoken of Jesus in prophecy that does not find its fulfillment typified by these Feasts! This is how important they are.

The psalmist once proclaimed, "Open my eyes that I might see wondrous things from your law." (Psm.119:18). God has hidden in His law of the Feasts His plan from beginning to end. He is methodically fulfilling each feast on its appointed day. If you want to know the next event on God's prophetic timetable, just consider the appointments found in the feasts.

Perhaps you may want to consider these in-depth studies I did on this subject. They are available in DVD or book form:



DVD series \$ 25.00



Book- \$ 9.95

Of the seven feasts of the Lord found in Leviticus 23, four are now history lessons having been fulfilled on the very day God appointed. The next great event is the Feast of Trumpets typifying the rapture of the church:



After that great event the two remaining Feasts of Leviticus 23 will herald in the Second Coming of Christ on the Feast of Atonement followed by the Millennial reign of Christ on earth typified by the Feast of Tabernacles.



What does all this have to do with our subject of grace? The answer is everything! Passover began the age of grace with the Father sending Jesus to be the Passover lamb that takes away the sin of the world (Jn.1:29). Jesus brought us pardon for our sins.

However, as we have established, God also wants us to have power over sin. To accomplish that second agenda of grace God sent the Holy Spirit to empower saved people such as you and me. When did God send the Holy Spirit? On the very day appointed for Pentecost:

**"...AND HE COMMANDED THEM TO...
WAIT FOR THE PROMISE OF THE FATHER...
YOU SHALL BE BAPTIZED WITH THE HOLY
SPIRIT NOT MANY DAYS FROM NOW...
YOU SHALL RECEIVE POWER
WHEN THE HOLY SPIRIT
HAS COME UPON YOU..."**

Acts 1:4-8

**"NOW WHEN THE DAY OF
PENTECOST HAD FULLY COME...
THEY WERE ALL FILLED
WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT..."**

Acts 2:1-4



THE SEVEN FEASTS OF THE LORD-HIS DIVINE APPOINTMENTS



DEATH OF CHRIST



BURIAL OF CHRIST



RESURRECTION OF CHRIST



HOLY SPIRIT SENT BY CHRIST



RAPTURE BY CHRIST



RETURN OF CHRIST



REIGN OF CHRIST

THE

JUSTIFICATION

OF THE BELIEVER



"FOR THE GRACE OF GOD THAT BRINGS SALVATION HAS APPEARED TO ALL MEN..."

Titus 2:11

THE

SANCTIFICATION

OF THE BELIEVER



"TEACHING US THAT DENYING UNGODLINESS AND WORLDLY LUSTS, WE SHOULD LIVE SOBERLY, RIGHTEOUSLY AND GODLY IN THIS PRESENT AGE..."

Titus 2:12

THE

GLORIFICATION

OF THE BELIEVER



"LOOKING FOR THE BLESSED HOPE AND GLORIOUS APPEARING OF OUR GREAT GOD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST..."

Titus 2:13

The Seven Feasts of the Lord (Lev. 23) reveal that Jesus is still going about performing His Father's business (Luke 2:49). These Seven Feasts divide into three progressive revelations: God's plan for the complete **JUSTIFICATION**, the complete **SANCTIFICATION**, and the complete **GLORIFICATION** of the believer. These encompass the past, present, and future work of Christ in our lives as His dedicated followers. If you have been justified by His saving grace then you have received one-third of the grace of God. However, there is more to come. Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to justified saints to teach them how to live godly lives in the midst of a crooked and perverse world. This is called sanctification. Receive the sanctifying work of God's Spirit and you will be well-prepared for the glorious appearing of Jesus Christ when the final act of glorification takes place. We have been well taught about the justification and glorification aspects of God's plan, but the "middle ground", our sanctification, has greatly suffered a lack of proper emphasis in today's theology. Why, dear saint, are we not fed the emphasis of what the grace of God came to teach, namely, how to "deny ungodliness and to live soberly, righteously and godly in this present age"? Rather, we seem to place all the emphasis upon having been justified by His grace, we should now just be waiting for His glorious appearing at the rapture! We are leaving out the middle ground! Consider Peter's balanced perspective:

JUSTIFICATION

"...REST YOUR HOPE FULLY UPON THE GRACE THAT IS BROUGHT TO YOU AT THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST;



Peter
26

SANCTIFICATION

AS OBEDIENT CHILDREN, NOT CONFORMING YOURSELVES TO YOUR FORMER LUSTS, AS IN YOUR IGNORANCE, BUT AS HE WHO CALLED YOU IS HOLY, YOU ALSO BE HOLY IN ALL YOUR CONDUCT..."

1 Pet. 1:13-15



SANTIFICATION

**“FOR THIS IS THE WILL OF GOD, YOUR SANCTIFICATION...
THAT EACH OF YOU SHOULD KNOW HOW TO
POSSESS HIS OWN VESSEL IN SANCTIFICATION AND HONOR...
FOR GOD DID NOT CALL US TO UNCLEANNES, BUT IN HOLINESS.
THEREFORE HE WHO REJECTS THIS DOES NOT REJECT MAN,
BUT GOD, WHO HAS ALSO GIVEN US HIS HOLY SPIRIT.”**

1 Thess. 4:3-8

**“NOW MAY THE GOD OF PEACE HIMSELF SANCTIFY YOU COMPLETELY;
AND MAY YOUR WHOLE SPIRIT, SOUL AND BODY
BE PRESERVED BLAMELESS AT THE COMING OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.
HE WHO CALLS YOU IS FAITHFUL, WHO ALSO WILL DO IT.”**

1 Thess. 5:23-24

For the most part, this call to sanctification by the Holy Spirit as an expression of God's will for His people has been widely rejected. Although what is clearly stated above to be unfinished business has rather been presented to God's people as “a done deal”, mostly by the perversion of grace teachers who present half-truths as the whole story.

Read carefully the above, for Paul did not say it has already been done, but rather that it will be done. Not only does this call to sanctification cover the physical body, but is also mandated for man's spirit and soul to be preserved “blameless” at the return of Jesus Christ.

Then we might also consider Paul's exhortations pertaining to God's grace functioning in the realm of achieving the believer's sanctification:

P

**“AND HE SAID TO ME, ‘MY GRACE IS SUFFICIENT FOR YOU,
FOR MY STRENGTH IS MADE PERFECT IN WEAKNESS.’**

O

**THEREFORE MOST GLADLY I WILL RATHER BOAST IN MY
INFIRMITIES, THAT THE POWER OF CHRIST MAY REST UPON ME.
THEREFORE I TAKE PLEASURE IN INFIRMITIES, IN REPROACHES,
IN NEEDS, IN PERSECUTIONS, IN DISTRESSES, FOR CHRIST'S SAKE.
FOR WHEN I AM WEAK, THEN I AM STRONG.”** 2 Cor. 12:9-10

W

**“AND NOW BRETHREN, I COMMEND YOU TO GOD AND TO
THE WORD OF HIS GRACE, WHICH IS ABLE TO BUILD YOU UP
AND GIVE YOU AN INHERITANCE AMONG THOSE WHO ARE
SANCTIFIED.”** Acts 20:32

E

R

**“YOU THEREFORE, MY SON,
BE STRONG IN THE GRACE
THAT IS IN CHRIST JESUS...”** 2 Tim. 2:1

Obviously, Paul thinks that God's grace should be applied to far more than achieving pardon for forgiveness of the believer's sins. The above demonstrate that he believes the grace of God also provides power as well as pardon. We shall explore that in depth in our next chapter.

**NEW
BIRTH
RECEIVED...**

**"DIVINE
INFLUENCE
UPON
THE HEART"**

GRACE

**"ITS
REFLECTION
IN
THE LIFE"**

**NEW
LIFE
LIVED...**

**"WHO ARE YOU, O GREAT MOUNTAIN?...
YOU SHALL BECOME
A PLAIN...
WITH
SHOUTS
OF**

GRACE!

GRACE!

**TO IT!"
Zech. 4:6-7**



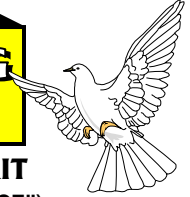
**JESUS THE CHRIST
("THE GRACE OF GOD")
Titus 2:11, Rom. 5:15**

**PARDON
OF SIN...**



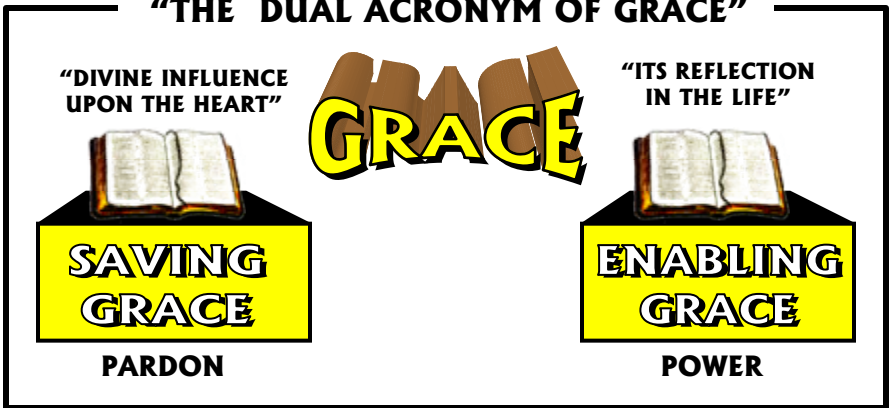
**THE HOLY SPIRIT
("THE SPIRIT OF GRACE")
Heb. 10:29, Zech. 12:10**

**POWER
OVER SIN...**



~ CHAPTER TWO ~

“THE DUAL ACRONYM OF GRACE”



Acronym- a word formed from the initial letter or letters of each of the successive parts or major parts of a compound term...” *Webster*

One of my favorite, and perhaps most effective method of teaching is with the use of acronyms to spell out truths in a manner easy to remember. In this chapter, we will seek to create a twofold spelling of the word “grace.” One will follow the theme of “saving grace” and the other will unfold the meaning of “enabling grace.”

We have great need to rightly divide this word of truth concerning grace. We have seen how careful God has been to make such a distinction:



These dual manifestations of Grace came through two persons of the Godhead, Jesus the Son of God and the Holy Spirit of God. Jesus is called “the grace of God (Titus 2:11) and the Holy Spirit is called “the Spirit of grace” (Heb.10:27). Both “the grace of God” and “the Spirit of grace” are gifts given by the Father, “the God of all grace” (1 Pet. 5:10).

So important are these dual gifts of grace that God the Father appointed them to be given on two of His sacred holy days, the Feast of Passover and the Feast of Pentecost. Make no mistake about this: God has separated these two different impartations of grace so that they would always be easily seen for what they are; two different manifestations of the grace of God imparted by two distinct persons of the Godhead, on two distinct holy days. Every believer needs them both to be at work in their life!

**“DIVINE INFLUENCE
UPON THE HEART”**

GRACE

**“ITS REFLECTION
IN THE LIFE”**



**SAVING
GRACE**



**ENABLING
GRACE**



**PARDON
BY THE CHRIST**

**G
R
A
C
E**



**POWER
BY THE HOLY SPIRIT**

**G
R
A
C
E**

In this chapter we will begin to unfold a twofold acronym spelling of the word “grace.” One column will develop the theme of defining “saving grace” through the finished work of Jesus Christ, while the other column will unfold the unfinished work of the Holy Spirit to impart “enabling grace” to God’s people. You will remember in the Strong’s concordance definition of “grace” we considered a twofold meaning to the word “grace.” First of all, grace was stated to be “Divine influence on the heart.” This is the finished work of Christ. The second aspect Strong’s gave to grace was “its reflection in the life.” This is the ongoing and unfinished work of the Holy Spirit. “Divine influence on the heart” imparts the new birth. However, as important as that is, it is “the reflection in the life” that proclaims to the world visible evidence that can be seen by living a new life.

So equally significant are these two stages of God’s amazing grace that God ordained them to be manifested through two persons of the Godhead: Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. Likewise, we saw that God set apart two different distinct Holy Feast days to commemorate these events. Passover foretold the death of Christ. Pentecost foreshadowed the empowering work of the Holy Spirit. God has carefully orchestrated these events to remain distinctly separate from one another. Forgive my purposeful play on the scriptures, but “may no man join together what God has separated.”

The apostle Peter gave ample warning about the practice of some teachers in twisting together the contents of the scriptures:



“PAUL, ACCORDING TO THE WISDOM GIVEN TO HIM, HAS WRITTEN TO YOU, AS IN ALL HIS EPISTLES, SPEAKING IN THEM OF THESE THINGS, IN WHICH ARE SOME THINGS HARD TO UNDERSTAND, WHICH THOSE WHO ARE UNTAUGHT AND UNSTABLE TWIST TO THEIR OWN DESTRUCTION, AS THEY DO ALSO THE REST OF THE SCRIPTURES...

YOU THEREFORE BELOVED...BEWARE LEST YOU ALSO FALL FROM YOUR OWN STEADFASTNESS, BEING LED AWAY WITH THE ERROR OF THE WICKED; BUT GROW IN THE GRACE AND KNOWLEDGE OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR, JESUS CHRIST...”

2 Pet. 3:15-18

“The error of the wicked” is not singled out as the practice of blatant sinful actions that can be seen by all, but rather a deceptive maneuver to “twist the scriptures” to say something other than what they were intended to convey. Notice Peter’s stated cure for this malady is to “grow in grace.” With this admonition, we shall now open the first acronym in the dual spelling of grace:

“DIVINE INFLUENCE UPON THE HEART”



GRACE

“ITS REFLECTION IN THE LIFE”





GOD'S
GRACE

CONTAINS



GIFTS

TO
ENABLE
US TO

GROW

It has been well taught that grace is a gift of God. Sadly, the other half of that story has not been so greatly emphasized. The emphasis has been “saved not by works” at the expense of “saved for good works” (Eph. 2:8-10). Paul preached both. Although clearly stated in God’s Word not only by Paul, but by Peter as well, both truths are just not equally presented to God’s people today. For the point of illustration consider the fullness of the new birth as presented by the apostle Peter:



**“SINCE YOU HAVE PURIFIED YOUR SOULS
IN OBEYING THE TRUTH...HAVING BEEN BORN AGAIN...
THROUGH THE WORD OF GOD...
NOW THIS IS THE WORD WHICH BY THE GOSPEL WAS
PREACHED TO YOU. THEREFORE AS NEWBORN BABES,
DESIRE THE SINCERE MILK OF THE WORD, THAT YOU MAY
GROW THEREBY, IF INDEED YOU HAVE TASTED THAT THE
LORD IS GRACIOUS...”** 1 Pet 1:22-25, 2:1-3

Notice Peter, in speaking of the gift of the new birth by the Word of God, launches right into telling his readers that this gift was given in order that they may be able to grow. Gifts of grace should lead into spiritual growth. Consider Paul’s clear teaching as to the purpose of God’s gifts:

**“BUT TO EACH ONE OF YOU GRACE WAS GIVEN
ACCORDING TO THE MEASURE OF CHRIST’S GIFT...
WHEN HE ASCENDED...HE GAVE GIFTS TO MEN...
AND HE HIMSELF GAVE SOME TO BE
APOSTLES...PROPHETS...EVANGELISTS...
PASTORS AND TEACHERS...
THAT WE SHOULD NO LONGER BE CHILDREN...
BUT GROW UP IN ALL THINGS INTO HIM WHO IS THE
HEAD-CHRIST... CAUSING GROWTH OF THE BODY...”**

Eph. 4:7-16 excerpts



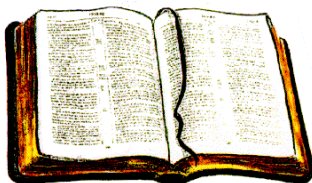
These two examples from the mouth of Peter and Paul plainly declare that God’s ultimate purpose for the giving of gifts is designed to produce growth!



GIFTS

Perhaps the greatest single gift of grace that God has given us to produce the ability to grow is

THE WORD OF GOD



GROW

**“SINCE YOU HAVE PURIFIED YOUR SOULS
IN OBEYING THE TRUTH...HAVING BEEN BORN AGAIN...
THROUGH THE WORD OF GOD...**

**NOW THIS IS THE WORD WHICH BY THE GOSPEL WAS PREACHED TO
YOU. THEREFORE AS NEWBORN BABES, DESIRE THE SINCERE MILK
OF THE WORD, THAT YOU MAY GROW THEREBY,
IF INDEED YOU HAVE TASTED THAT THE LORD IS GRACIOUS...”**

1 Pet 1:22-25, 2:1-3

**“EVERY GOOD GIFT AND EVERY PERFECT GIFT IS FROM ABOVE...
HE BROUGHT US FORTH BY THE WORD OF TRUTH,
THAT WE MIGHT BE A KIND OF FIRSTFRUITS OF HIS CREATURES.”**

James 1:17-18

**“FOR THE WORD OF GOD IS LIVING AND POWERFUL, AND SHARPER
THAN ANY TWO-EDGED SWORD, PIERCING EVEN TO THE DIVISION
OF SOUL AND SPIRIT, AND OF JOINTS AND MARROW, AND IS A
DISCERNER OF THE THOUGHTS AND INTENTS OF THE HEART.”**

Heb. 4:12

**“...WE SHOULD NO LONGER BE CHILDREN, TOSSED TO AND FRO
AND CARRIED ABOUT BY EVERY WIND OF DOCTRINE...
BUT...WE MAY GROW UP IN ALL THINGS INTO HIM...”**

Eph. 4:14-15

**“I WRITE TO YOU YOUNG MEN,
BECAUSE YOU HAVE OVERCOME THE WICKED ONE...
BECAUSE YOU ARE STRONG AND THE WORD OF GOD ABIDES IN YOU...”**

1 Jn.2:13-14

Nearly every reference to the Word of God is closely associated with some form of growth, strength or spiritual power being developed in the believer. The Word of God is depicted as milk for babies, meat for the mature, and wisdom against the deception of the Wicked One. To study the Word of God is to study Jesus, for among all His names, He is called “the Word of God” (Jn. 1:1-14, Rev. 19:13).

Any gift of God's grace is a gift of God's power. I believe God still desires that we be like the early church that was known for its "great grace" and "great power" (Acts 4:32-33.) That power comes through the ongoing act of "growing in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ" (2 Pet.3:18). Remember, the Holy Spirit was sent to take the things of Jesus and reveal them to us (Jn. 16:14).

We have a trinity of grace at work in the believer:

~ **GOD THE FATHER** ~
 "THE GOD OF ALL GRACE"
 1 Pet. 5:10



"A
 THREE
 FOLD
 CORD

IS
 NOT
 QUICKLY
 BROKEN"

~ **GOD THE SON** ~
 "THE GRACE OF GOD"
 Titus 2:11

~ **GOD THE SPIRIT** ~
 "THE SPIRIT OF GRACE"
 Jn. 10:29

GOD THE FATHER

"THE GOD OF ALL GRACE"
 1 Pet. 5:10



GIFTS OF POWER

"THE EXCEEDING GREATNESS OF HIS POWER TOWARD THOSE WHO BELIEVE"
 Eph. 1:19

JESUS THE CHRIST

"THE NAME OF JESUS"
 Phil. 2:10

"THE BLOOD OF JESUS"
 Heb. 9:14

THE HOLY SPIRIT

"THE 9 FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT"
 Gal. 5:22

"THE 9 GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT"
 1 Cor. 12:4-11

"THE 7 SPIRITS OF GOD"
 Isa. 11:1-2

Below you will find a bevy of support for the various aspects of God's grace being manifested as various gifts to His people through the Father sending both Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit as His "good and perfect gifts":

~ GOD THE FATHER ~
"THE GOD OF ALL GRACE"
1 Pet. 5:10

Ecc. 4:12

3

"A
THREE
FOLD
CORD



IS
NOT
QUICKLY
BROKEN"

~ GOD THE SON ~
"THE GRACE OF GOD"
Titus 2:11

~ GOD THE SPIRIT ~
"THE SPIRIT OF GRACE"
Jn. 10:29

"EVERY GOOD GIFT...

EVERY PERFECT GIFT...

IS FROM ABOVE, AND COMES DOWN FROM THE FATHER OF LIGHTS
IN WHOM THERE IS NO SHADOW OF TURNING"

(Jas. 1:17)



1. **JESUS-THE LAMB OF GOD...**

(Jn. 1:29)

2. **JESUS-THE WORD OF GOD...**

(Jn. 1:1,14)

3. **JESUS-OUR HIGH PRIEST...**

(Heb. 5:14)

4. **JESUS-THE BAPTIZER...**

(Jn. 1:33)

5. **JESUS-THE HEALER...**

(Acts 10:38)

6. **JESUS-THE APOSTLE...**

(Heb. 3:1)

7. **JESUS-THE PROPHET...**

(Acts 3:22-26)

8. **JESUS-THE EVANGELIST...**

(Jn. 12:30)

9. **JESUS-THE PASTOR...**

(Jn. 10:14)

10. **JESUS-THE TEACHER...**

(Matt. 23:8)

11. **THE NAME OF JESUS...**

(Phil. 2:9)

12. **THE BLOOD OF JESUS...**

(Heb. 9:14)

1. **THE SPIRIT OF CONVICTION...**

(Jn. 16:8)

2. **THE SPIRIT OF ADOPTION...**

(Rom. 8:15)

3. **THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH...**

(Jn. 16:13)

4. **THE SPIRIT OF SANCTIFICATION...**

(1 Pet. 1:2)

5. **THE SPIRIT OF GLORY...**

(1 Pet. 4:14)

6. **THE SPIRIT OF PROPHECY...**

(1 Pet. 1:21)

7. **THE SPIRIT OF WISDOM...**

(Isa. 11:2)

8. **THE SPIRIT OF KNOWLEDGE...**

(Isa. 11:2)

9. **THE SPIRIT OF UNDERSTANDING...**

(Isa. 11:2)

10. **THE SPIRIT OF COUNSEL...**

(Isa. 11:2)

11. **THE SPIRIT OF MIGHT...**

(Isa. 11:2)

12. **THE SPIRIT OF THE FEAR
OF THE LORD...**

(Isa. 11:2)

There is a popular Christian cliché which says:



"BLOOM WHERE YOU ARE PLANTED"

The apostle Peter exhorts us to

"...GROW IN THE GRACE AND KNOWLEDGE OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST."
2 Pet. 3:18

In the natural realm, it takes good, rich potting soil to produce a healthy plant. A spiritual application of this truth is easy to see. The good, rich potting soil in which we Christians must be planted is the manifold grace of God such as we have been considering. Only then can we grow in the grace of God as Peter instructs. It is not the plant that produces such growth, but the soil in which it is planted. If you don't believe that, try planting some healthy roses in cat litter and watch what happens to their previous beauty!

It is a humbling thing, but growth is not produced by the plant, but by the strength of the soil in which it has been planted. Jesus clearly made that stark comparison in His teaching of the parable of the sower (Matt.13, Mark 4, Luke 8). As Christians, we must maintain a humble and meek attitude such as Paul states if we also desire to see strength blossom in the midst of weakness:

**"AND HE SAID TO ME,
'MY GRACE IS SUFFICIENT FOR YOU,
FOR MY STRENGTH IS
MADE PERFECT IN WEAKNESS.'
THEREFORE MOST GLADLY I WILL
RATHER BOAST IN MY INFIRMITIES,
THAT THE POWER OF CHRIST MAY
REST UPON ME...
FOR WHEN I AM WEAK,
THEN I AM STRONG."**
2 Cor. 12:9-10



The apostle James reminds us:



**"...BUT HE GIVES MORE GRACE.
THEREFORE HE SAYS:
'GOD RESISTS THE PROUD
BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE.'
..HUMBLE YOURSELVES IN THE SIGHT OF GOD
AND HE WILL LIFT YOU UP."**
James 4:6-10

If we understand the importance of “gifts to grow” as an expression of grace, let us now consider the second acronym in our spelling of grace. It consists of the dual letters of “R&R”. We are not talking about the popular cliché of “Rest and Relaxation”. Rather we are presenting a call for the believer to be “Redeemed and to Reign.”

**“DIVINE INFLUENCE
UPON THE HEART”**



GRACE

**“ITS REFLECTION
IN THE LIFE”**



**PARDON
BY THE CHRIST**



**POWER
BY THE HOLY SPIRIT**

**GIFT
REDEEM
A
C
E**

COMFORT

**GROW
REIGN
A
C
E**

CONFRONT

Again, let me stress that the point has been well made about grace's power to redeem fallen mankind. However, the other half of that truth about grace is that those who are redeemed are called to reign in life. Here are both of these truths side-by-side as presented by the apostle Paul in the book of Romans:

**“FOR ALL HAVE
SINNED AND FALL
SHORT OF THE GLORY
OF GOD.
BEING JUSTIFIED
FREELY BY HIS GRACE
THROUGH THE
REDEMPTION THAT IS
IN CHRIST JESUS...
BY HIS BLOOD
THROUGH FAITH...”**
Romans 3:24-25



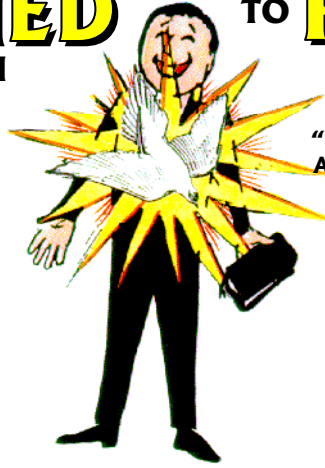
**“...THOSE WHO
RECEIVE ABUNDANCE
OF GRACE AND OF
THE GIFT
OF RIGHTEOUSNESS
WILL REIGN IN LIFE
THROUGH THE ONE
JESUS CHRIST...
GRACE MIGHT REIGN
THROUGH
RIGHTEOUSNESS...”**
Romans 5:17,21

REDEEMED FROM DEATH

TO REIGN IN LIFE

**“FOR ALL HAVE
SINNED AND FALL
SHORT OF
THE GLORY OF GOD.
BEING JUSTIFIED
FREELY BY HIS GRACE
THROUGH THE
REDEMPTION THAT IS
IN CHRIST JESUS...
BY HIS BLOOD
THROUGH FAITH...”**

Romans 3:24-25



**“...THOSE WHO RECEIVE
ABUNDANCE OF GRACE
AND OF
THE GIFT
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WILL REIGN IN LIFE
THROUGH THE ONE
JESUS CHRIST...
GRACE MIGHT REIGN
THROUGH
RIGHTEOUSNESS...”**

Romans 5:17,21

It is my great suspicion that a large segment of God's people neither understand what is meant by the word "redemption" or what is meant by the concept to "reign" in life. Let us look first at the subject of redemption. Being Gentile converts to a Jewish-based religion, we lack the background needed to understand the meaning of redemption. This word does not mean "forgiveness of sin." Literally the word means "to buy back." Redemption certainly provides the act of receiving forgiveness of sins, but this is not its meaning. Redemption has to do with the great price paid to obtain forgiveness of sins. We Gentiles lack understanding of the cost of redemption. We are more prone to emphasize "free" than "cost".

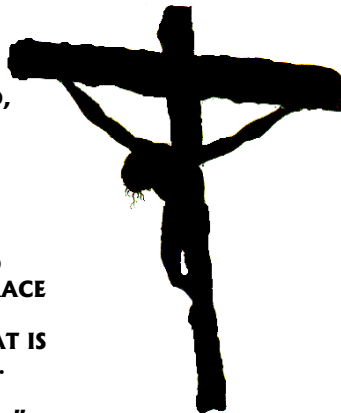
Let us begin by stating the connection that redemption has with the forgiveness of sins:

**“IN WHOM
WE HAVE
REDEMPTION
THROUGH HIS BLOOD,
THE
FORGIVENESS OF
SINS...”**

Col. 1:4

**“BEING JUSTIFIED
FREELY BY HIS GRACE
THROUGH THE
REDEMPTION THAT IS
IN CHRIST JESUS...
BY HIS BLOOD
THROUGH FAITH...”**

Rom. 3:24-25



**“IN HIM
WE HAVE
REDEMPTION
THROUGH
HIS BLOOD,
THE FORGIVENESS
OF SINS
ACCORDING TO
THE RICHES
OF HIS GRACE...
SEALED BY THE
HOLY SPIRIT UNTIL
THE DAY
OF REDEMPTION
OF
THE
PURCHASED
POSSESSION...”**

Eph. 1:7,14

The last line of Paul's statement above holds the key to the real purpose behind the word redemption: when one becomes "redeemed" he/she becomes a "purchased possession."

To speak of redemption to a Jew who was under God's Mosaic Law was to speak of cost. It always dealt with what price was to be paid for redemption:

REDEMPTION

OF
THE PURCHASED POSSESSION"



"...YOU HAVE SOLD YOURSELVES FOR NOTHING, AND YOU SHALL BE REDEEMED WITHOUT MONEY." Isa.52:3

"...NONE OF THEM CAN BY ANY MEANS REDEEM HIS BROTHER, NOR GIVE TO GOD A RANSOM FOR HIM. FOR THE REDEMPTION OF THEIR SOULS IS COSTLY..." Psalm 49:6-8

Consider what was contained in the Law of redemption:

'NOW IF A SOJOURNER OR STRANGER CLOSE TO YOU BECOMES RICH, AND ONE OF YOUR BRETHREN WHO DWELLS BY HIM BECOMES POOR, AND SELLS HIMSELF TO THE STRANGER OR SOJOURNER CLOSE TO YOU, OR TO A MEMBER OF THE STRANGER'S FAMILY, AFTER HE IS SOLD HE MAY BE REDEEMED AGAIN. ONE OF HIS BROTHERS MAY REDEEM HIM; OR HIS UNCLE OR HIS UNCLE'S SON MAY REDEEM HIM; OR ANYONE WHO IS NEAR OF KIN TO HIM IN HIS FAMILY MAY REDEEM HIM; OR IF HE IS ABLE HE MAY REDEEM HIMSELF. THUS HE SHALL RECKON WITH HIM WHO BOUGHT HIM: THE PRICE OF HIS RELEASE SHALL BE ACCORDING TO THE NUMBER OF YEARS, FROM THE YEAR THAT HE WAS SOLD TO HIM UNTIL THE YEAR OF JUBILEE; IT SHALL BE ACCORDING TO THE TIME OF A HIRED SERVANT FOR HIM. IF THERE ARE STILL MANY YEARS REMAINING, ACCORDING TO THEM HE SHALL REPAY THE PRICE OF HIS REDEMPTION FROM THE MONEY WITH WHICH HE WAS BOUGHT. AND IF THERE REMAIN BUT A FEW YEARS UNTIL THE YEAR OF JUBILEE, THEN HE SHALL RECKON WITH HIM, AND ACCORDING TO HIS YEARS HE SHALL REPAY HIM THE PRICE OF HIS REDEMPTION.'

Lev 25:47-53

With this background of understanding pertaining to "redemption", let us now consider several New Testament passages which build on the significance of the above principle. There is still a cost to redemption. Here is Peter:



Peter

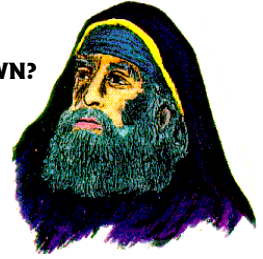
"AND IF YOU CALL ON THE FATHER, WHO WITHOUT PARTIALITY JUDGES ACCORDING TO EACH ONE'S WORK, CONDUCT YOURSELVES THROUGHOUT THE TIME OF YOUR STAY HERE IN FEAR; KNOWING THAT YOU WERE NOT REDEEMED WITH CORRUPTIBLE THINGS, LIKE SILVER OR GOLD, FROM YOUR AIMLESS CONDUCT RECEIVED BY TRADITION FROM YOUR FATHERS, BUT (YOU WERE REDEEMED) WITH THE PRECIOUS BLOOD OF CHRIST, AS OF A LAMB WITHOUT BLEMISH AND WITHOUT SPOT."

1 Peter 1:17-20

Paul also stressed the cost of redemption:

**“DO YOU NOT KNOW THAT YOUR BODY IS THE TEMPLE
OF THE HOLY SPIRIT WHO IS IN YOU,
WHOM YOU HAVE FROM GOD, AND YOU ARE NOT YOUR OWN?
FOR YOU WERE BOUGHT WITH A PRICE;
THEREFORE GLORIFY GOD IN YOUR BODY
AND IN YOUR SPIRIT, WHICH ARE GOD’S (PROPERTY)”**

1 Cor. 6:19-20



Paul

**“IN HIM YOU ALSO TRUSTED, AFTER YOU HEARD THE
WORD OF TRUTH, THE GOSPEL OF YOUR SALVATION;
IN WHOM ALSO, HAVING BELIEVED, YOU WERE SEALED
WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT OF PROMISE,
WHO IS THE GUARANTEE OF OUR INHERITANCE UNTIL
THE REDEMPTION OF THE PURCHASED POSSESSION...”**

Eph. 1:13-14

**“AND DO NOT GRIEVE THE HOLY SPIRIT OF GOD,
BY WHOM YOU WERE SEALED
FOR THE DAY OF REDEMPTION.”**

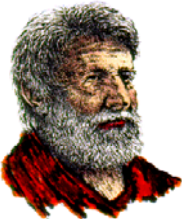
Eph. 4:30

The type and shadow contained in the Old Testament Law pertaining to redemption spoke of being “ransomed/bought back.” It was a price paid in silver or gold. Peter directly references this pattern in conveying the immense cost of redemption for the New Testament believer. The cost was not silver and gold but rather the precious blood of Jesus Christ! The point being made is that redemption is still costly!

What was the cost? The blood of a lamb without spot or blemish. Peter speaks of the Old Covenant sacrificial lambs which were to be offered on the Day of Atonement for the sins of the people. You may remember that John the Baptist declared Jesus to be:

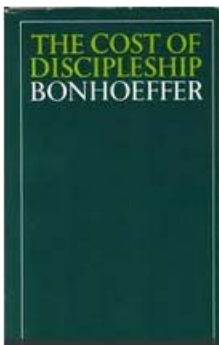
**“...THE LAMB OF GOD,
WHO TAKES AWAY THE SINS OF THE WORLD.”**

John 1:29



Redemption is still a message about the cost, the price paid to buy back! Sadly, that message today has been replaced with an undue emphasis upon being “free” rather than being all the more costly.

Paul emphasizes to New Testament believers under grace that “you were bought with a price” and “you are not your own.” He refers to the saints as “the purchased possession” that are to be living a life that glorified their new owner-God! Oh, part of that message is preached! Time and time again you can hear the message of having been “sealed for the day of redemption” (Eph. 1:13). What about the rest of Paul’s words spoken just three chapters later in the same epistle warning those who have been sealed for the day of redemption not to “grieve the Holy Spirit by whom we have been sealed for the day of redemption.” The message of the cost of redemption has been replaced with a free version. This is nothing but cheap grace.



“The word of cheap grace has been the ruin of more Christians than any commandment of works. ...Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ.”

*Dietrich
Bonhoeffer*

If you have never read this classic work of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, I highly recommend that you would. His chapter on “cheap grace” vs. “costly grace” greatly depicts the malady of the church today. I quote a few excerpts from it for your consideration:

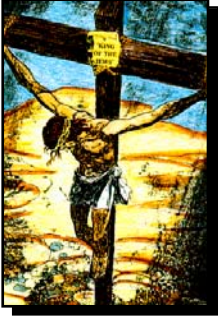
“In such a church the world finds a cheap covering for its sins; no contrition is required, still less any real desire to be delivered from sin. Cheap grace therefore amounts to a denial of the living Word of God... Cheap grace means the justification of sin without the justification of the sinner. Grace alone does everything, they say, and so everything can remain as it was before...Let the Christian live like the rest of the world, let him model himself on the world’s standards in every sphere of life, and not presumptuously aspire to live a different life under grace from his old life under sin...let him be comforted and rest assured in his possession of this grace-for grace alone does everything. Instead of following Christ, let the Christian enjoy the consolations of his grace!

That is what we mean by cheap grace, the grace which amounts to the justification of sin without the justification of the repentant sinner who departs from sin and from whom sin departs.

Cheap grace is not the kind of forgiveness which frees us from the toils of sin. Cheap grace is the grace we bestow on ourselves. It means that I set out to live the Christian life in the world with all my sins justified beforehand. I can go and sin as much as I like, and rely on this grace to forgive me..I can remain as I was before, but with the added assurance that the grace of God will cover me...

The word of cheap grace has been the ruin of more Christians than any commandment of works. Cheap grace is the deadly enemy in our church. We are fighting for costly grace.”

Costly grace is worth cultivating. Ponder the cost of redemption-it was not cheap and should not be cheapened by only harping on it being “free.” Think about it: for it cost the Father the life-blood of His innocent Son to purchase back the lives of sin-laden mankind. Redemption cost God the sacrifice of the innocent for the guilty. Ponder carefully Paul’s record of this costly exchange:



“...GOD WAS IN CHRIST RECONCILING THE WORLD TO HIMSELF THROUGH JESUS CHRIST... FOR HE MADE HIM WHO KNEW NO SIN TO BE SIN FOR US, THAT WE MIGHT BECOME THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD IN HIM.”

2 Cor. 5:19-21

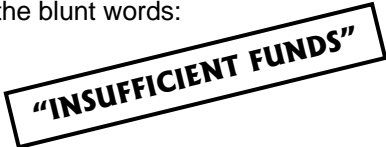
“FOR IF WHEN WE WERE ENEMIES WE WERE RECONCILED TO GOD THROUGH THE DEATH OF HIS SON, MUCH MORE, HAVING BEEN RECONCILED, WE SHALL BE SAVED BY HIS LIFE.”

Rom. 5:10

“FOR WHEN WE WERE STILL WITHOUT STRENGTH, IN DUE TIME CHRIST DIED FOR THE UNGODLY... GOD DEMONSTRATES HIS OWN LOVE TOWARD US, IN THAT WHILE WE WERE STILL SINNERS, CHRIST DIED FOR US. MUCH MORE THEN, HAVING NOW BEEN JUSTIFIED BY HIS BLOOD, WE SHALL BE SAVED FROM WRATH THROUGH HIM.”

Rom. 5:6-9

Have you ever had the bank stamp your rejected check with the blunt words:



No one has sufficient funds to pay the price of redemption. Remember:

“...YOU WERE NOT REDEEMED WITH CORRUPTIBLE THINGS, LIKE SILVER OR GOLD, BUT WITH THE PRECIOUS BLOOD OF CHRIST, AS OF A LAMB WITHOUT BLEMISH AND WITHOUT SPOT.”

1 Peter 1:17-20

REDEMPTION



“THOSE WHO TRUST IN THEIR WEALTH AND BOAST IN THE MULTITUDE OF THEIR RICHES, NONE OF THEM CAN BY ANY MEANS REDEEM HIS BROTHER, NOR GIVE TO GOD A RANSOM FOR HIM, FOR THE REDEMPTION OF THEIR SOULS IS COSTLY...”

Psalm 49:6-8

REDEEMED IN ORDER TO REIGN

FROM DEATH IN LIFE

"FOR ALL HAVE SINNED AND FALL SHORT OF THE GLORY OF GOD. BEING JUSTIFIED FREELY BY HIS GRACE THROUGH THE REDEMPTION THAT IS IN CHRIST JESUS... BY HIS BLOOD THROUGH FAITH..."

Romans 3:24-25



"...THOSE WHO RECEIVE ABUNDANCE OF GRACE AND OF THE GIFT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS WILL REIGN IN LIFE THROUGH THE ONE JESUS CHRIST... GRACE MIGHT REIGN THROUGH RIGHTEOUSNESS..."

Romans 5:17,21

The message of redemption is only half the truth. We were redeemed from death in order to reign in life. When we think about "reigning" we generally tend to think of either the Millennial reign of Christ that lies ahead, or we think of the promise of reigning with Christ for all eternity. However, this is not the "reign" of which Paul speaks here in Romans Chapter Five. The verse says we are called to "reign in life", not just in the afterlife. Paul is speaking about the believer reigning in life here in the nasty here and now in which we presently live. This is not a mandate we can put off to later. Truth is:

WE MUST REIGN NOW... IF WE INTEND TO REIGN LATER...



Romans:

Revelation:

"...THOSE WHO RECEIVE ABUNDANCE OF GRACE AND OF THE GIFT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS WILL REIGN IN LIFE THROUGH THE ONE JESUS CHRIST... GRACE MIGHT REIGN THROUGH RIGHTEOUSNESS..."

Romans 5:17,21

"...FOR YOU WERE SLAIN AND HAVE REDEEMED US TO GOD BY YOUR BLOOD OUT OF EVERY TRIBE AND TONGUE AND PEOPLE AND NATION, AND HAVE MADE US KINGS AND PRIESTS TO OUR GOD; AND WE SHALL REIGN ON THE EARTH..."

Rev.5:9-10

Paul in Romans promises us to reign in life. John in Revelation promises us to reign on the earth for a thousand years. However, the latter is conditional to fulfilling the former promise: we must first learn to "reign in life" to qualify to "reign on earth" in the Millennium. Although some may teach otherwise, we cannot claim the right to reign in the Millennium with Christ unless we first learn to reign in the nasty here and now. Let us ponder how this is to be done.

**"IF WE
SUFFER
WITH HIM,**

**WE SHALL ALSO
REIGN
WITH HIM"**

2 Tim. 2:12



**"FOR TO YOU IT HAS BEEN GRANTED ON BEHALF OF CHRIST,
NOT ONLY TO BELIEVE IN HIM,
BUT ALSO TO SUFFER FOR HIS SAKE."**

Phil. 1:29

The promises of reigning with Christ are very conditional promises. Who will reign with Him? Those who suffer with Him (2 Tim. 2:12). Who will reign with Him? Those who overcome as Christ overcame (Rev. 3:21).

The scriptures are laced with pictures of the saints in heaven possessing crowns on their heads. Crowns are symbolic of reigning. It says of Jesus' Second Coming:

"...AND ON HIS HEAD WERE MANY CROWNS..."

Rev. 19:12



**THE
CROWN
OF LIFE**
(Rev. 2:10
Jas. 1:12)

**THE
CROWN
OF GLORY**
(1 Pet. 5:4)

**THE
CROWN OF
RIGHTEOUSNESS**
(2 Tim. 4:8)

**THE
CROWN OF
REJOICING**
(Phil. 4:1)

**THE
IMPERISHABLE
CROWN**
(1 Pet. 5:24)

Five different crowns are mentioned in scripture. Jesus wore them all and calls His followers to earn the right to do the same. For instance, look at the first one above, "the Crown of Life." It appears twice in scripture pertaining to believers:

"...DO NOT FEAR ANY OF THOSE THINGS WHICH YOU ARE ABOUT TO SUFFER. INDEED, THE DEVIL IS ABOUT TO THROW SOME OF YOU IN PRISON, THAT YOU MAY BE TESTED... BE FAITHFUL UNTIL DEATH, AND I WILL GIVE YOU THE CROWN OF LIFE."

Rev. 2:10



"BLESSED IS THE MAN WHO ENDURES TEMPTATION; FOR WHEN HE HAS BEEN PROVEN, HE WILL RECEIVE THE CROWN OF LIFE WHICH THE LORD HAS PROMISED TO THOSE WHO LOVE HIM."

Jas. 1:12

"The Crown of Life" is not given for receiving the gift of eternal life through Jesus Christ. Rather, it is a reward promised to (1) those who are willing to die for Christ, and (2) those who are willing to live for Christ. Multitudes of Christians are called to die for Christ as martyrs, but all Christians are called to live for Christ by saying no to temptation.

TO DIE FOR THE CAUSE OF CHRIST:



"...DO NOT FEAR ANY OF THOSE THINGS WHICH YOU ARE ABOUT TO SUFFER. INDEED, THE DEVIL IS ABOUT TO THROW SOME OF YOU IN PRISON, THAT YOU MAY BE TESTED... BE FAITHFUL UNTIL DEATH, AND I WILL GIVE YOU THE CROWN OF LIFE."

Rev. 2:10



TO LIVE FOR THE CAUSE OF CHRIST:

"BLESSED IS THE MAN WHO ENDURES TEMPTATION; FOR WHEN HE HAS BEEN PROVEN, HE WILL RECEIVE THE CROWN OF LIFE WHICH THE LORD HAS PROMISED TO THOSE WHO LOVE HIM."

Jas. 1:12

Consider well the noteworthy parallels in these two passages:

- 1. BOTH INVOLVE A CALL TO SUFFERING...**
- 2. BOTH ARE CONSIDERED TO BE A TEST...**
- 3. ONE IS TESTED BY TRIBULATION-ONE BY TEMPTATION...**
- 4. BOTH COME THROUGH SATAN AS ADVERSARY OR TEMPTER...**
- 5. BOTH LEAD TO THE CROWN OF LIFE...**
- 6. ONE BY DYING FOR CHRIST-ONE OBTAINED BY LIVING FOR CHRIST...**
- 7. THAT MAKES BOTH TO BE MARTYRS FOR CHRIST...**

What is presented above becomes the core essence of what it means to "reign in life". It does not matter whether we are in parts of the world that suffer great persecution for Christ, or whether we are among those who live in great prosperity under temptation. Whether it is persecution or prosperity that constitutes our test by Satan, to "reign in life" is to say no to him as our adversary or in his role as the tempter. Paul was worried about the saints vulnerability toward Satan in this role:

"FOR THIS REASON, WHEN I COULD NO LONGER ENDURE IT, I SENT TO KNOW YOUR FAITH, LEST BY SOME MEANS THE TEMPTER HAD TEMPTED YOU, AND OUR LABOR MIGHT BE IN VAIN."

1 Thess 3:5



SATAN AS THE TEMPTER

Genesis opens with the appearance of Satan as the Tempter. Temptation brought down Adam and Eve. Later Satan uses it on Cain to tempt him to kill his brother Abel. It is here that we get the great mandate set before all of how we are to combat sin:

"...SIN LIES AT THE DOOR, AND ITS DESIRE IS FOR YOU, BUT YOU SHOULD RULE OVER IT."

Gen. 4:7

Paul sets this same mandate before the saints under God's grace:

"THEREFORE DO NOT LET SIN REIGN IN YOUR MORTAL BODY, THAT YOU SHOULD OBEY IT IN ITS LUSTS... FOR SIN SHALL NOT HAVE DOMINION OVER YOU, FOR YOU ARE NOT UNDER LAW BUT UNDER GRACE."

Rom. 6:12-14

"REDEEMED



TO REIGN"

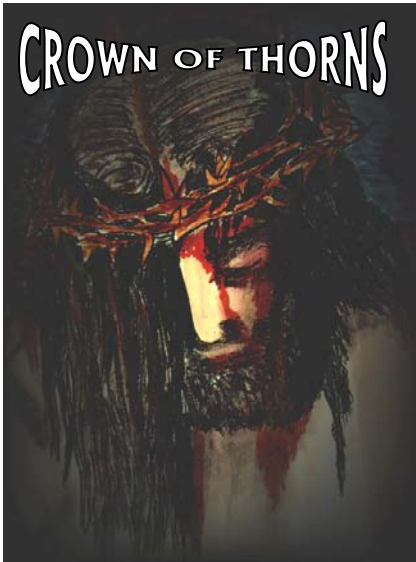
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Romans 5:17,21

**"THEREFORE
DO NOT LET SIN REIGN
IN YOUR MORTAL BODY,
THAT YOU SHOULD OBEY IT
IN ITS LUSTS...
FOR SIN SHALL NOT HAVE DOMINION
OVER YOU, FOR YOU ARE NOT UNDER
LAW BUT UNDER GRACE."**

Rom. 6:12-14

Jesus reigned over sin by willingly wearing the crown of thorns as "the Suffering Christ."



Such passages as these clearly convey that it is not Jesus who is to do all the suffering in resisting sin. The call to "reign in life" is a call to reign over sin. Remember, it lies at your door and its desire is for you, but you are to rule (reign) over it.

**"THEREFORE,
SINCE CHRIST SUFFERED FOR
US IN THE FLESH,
ARM YOURSELVES ALSO
WITH THE SAME MIND,
FOR HE WHO HAS
SUFFERED IN THE FLESH
HAS CEASED
FROM SIN..."**

1 Pet. 4:1

**"YOU HAVE NOT YET RESISTED
TO BLOODSHED
STRIVING AGAINST SIN."**

Heb. 4:12

**"FOR TO THIS
WERE YOU CALLED,
BECAUSE CHRIST ALSO
SUFFERED FOR US,
LEAVING US AN EXAMPLE,
THAT YOU SHOULD
FOLLOW
IN HIS STEPS..."**

1 Pet. 2:21-22

Let us now add the third acronym in our dual spelling of grace:

**“DIVINE INFLUENCE
UPON THE HEART”**

**“ITS REFLECTION
IN THE LIFE”**



GRACE



**PARDON
BY THE CHRIST**



**POWER
BY THE HOLY SPIRIT**

**GIFT
REDEEM
ACCEPTED**

**C
E**  **COMFORT**

**GROW
REIGN
ADVERSITY**

**C
E**  **CONFRONT**

We now add the word “accepted” to our spelling of saving grace, and the word “adversity” to our spelling of enabling grace. These two words continue to establish the pattern of words that comfort us, and words that confront us.

We have seen that God's grace is certainly a gift that comforts, but that gift becomes confronting as it calls us to grow. We also learned that by God's grace we were redeemed bringing us great comfort, but then we were confronted by the added concept of being redeemed by God with a purpose: We are to reign in life.

Let us ponder now as a word of comfort that we have been “accepted” by God, but let us also see that it is confronting in that we were accepted unto “adversity” as the only method by which we may grow. We begin to see the whole counsel of God concerning the doctrine of grace when we embrace words that comfort us and words that confront us. Take away the latter and the church remains on a circular track in which the words that comfort us are repeated over and over. They are wonderfully comforting to hear, but they do not stimulate us to grow beyond their limited content.



Paul



Peter



ACCEPTED UNTO **ADVERSITY**
IN THE BELOVED... **OF THE BROTHERHOOD...**

“BLESSED BE THE GOD AND FATHER OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST WHO HAS BLESSED US WITH EVERY SPIRITUAL BLESSING IN THE HEAVENLY PLACES IN CHRIST,... HAVING PREDESTINED US TO ADOPTION AS SONS BY JESUS CHRIST TO HIMSELF... TO THE PRAISE AND GLORY OF HIS GRACE, BY WHICH HE HAS MADE US ACCEPTED IN THE BELOVED... ACCORDING TO THE RICHES OF HIS GRACE WHICH HE MADE TO ABOUND TOWARD US...”
 Eph. 1:3-8 excerpts

THE WORK OF THE CROSS OF CHRIST FOR US

“BE SOBER, BE VIGILANT; BECAUSE YOUR ADVERSARY THE DEVIL... RESIST HIM, STEADFAST IN THE FAITH, KNOWING THAT THE SAME SUFFERINGS ARE EXPERIENCED BY YOUR BROTHERHOOD IN THE WORLD. BUT MAY THE GOD OF ALL GRACE, WHO HAS CALLED US TO HIS ETERNAL GLORY BY CHRIST JESUS, AFTER YOU HAVE SUFFERED A WHILE, PERFECT, ESTABLISH, STRENGTHEN, AND SETTLE YOU.”
 1 Pet. 5:8-10

THE WORK OF THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST IN US

Above, we have both Paul and Peter presenting the blessings of God's grace, one comes through the concept of "acceptance" by grace, the other through "adversity" that is also contained in God's grace.

We must see that both passages above stem from the hand of "God the Father of all grace". Paul's message is one of acceptance into the family of God by the riches of His grace. Peter's thoughts center upon adversity that comes from Satan which is commonly experienced by all the Christian brotherhood throughout the world. However, as painful as it is, it too imparts God's grace to us. Typically, we tend to only consider the likes of Paul's message above as being the blessings of God. The idea of experiencing suffering under the adversary is usually deemed to be some sort of cursing at work, usually the result of sin. This is wrong thinking, very wrong! Look carefully at what Peter states that the "God of all grace" brings forth after you suffer a while under adversity from Satan. By it, God will "perfect, establish, strengthen and settle you", and it comes through allowing Satanic adversity to come to us. Truly, Satan means it for evil, but God will work it for good.

**“SHALL WE INDEED ACCEPT GOOD FROM GOD,
AND SHALL WE NOT ACCEPT ADVERSITY?
IN ALL THIS JOB
DID NOT SIN WITH
HIS LIPS.”**

Job 2:10

May we all carefully consider these exhortative words of Job in light of our present topic of adversity. Shall we only take the blessings of acceptance by the riches of God's grace, and then reject the call to accept adversity from the God of all grace, who desires us to be “perfected, established, strengthened and settled” through adversity? Shall we continue to only accept half-truths as the whole truth? Paul gives us a promise in Philippians 1:6 that conveys God's full intention to finish what He began in the life of every believer:



**“I AM CONVINCED AND SURE OF THIS VERY THING,
THAT HE WHO BEGAN A GOOD WORK IN YOU
WILL CONTINUE UNTIL THE DAY OF JESUS CHRIST--
RIGHT UP TO THE TIME OF HIS RETURN--
DEVELOPING AND PERFECTING AND BRINGING IT
TO FULL COMPLETION IN YOU...
BECAUSE YOU ARE ALL PARTAKERS...OF GRACE.”**

Phil. 1:6-7 Amplified

That work began when God accepted us by His grace into His family. The work will continue right up until the return of Christ. The means by which this perfecting work will be completed is adversity. The only way in which God can finish what He started is by changing our attitude toward adversity. Job posed the question “Shall we accept good from God, and shall we not accept adversity?” (Job 2:10). King Solomon takes even a more bold approach in Ecclesiastes 7:14:

**“IN THE DAY OF PROSPERITY BE JOYFUL,
BUT IN THE DAY OF ADVERSITY CONSIDER:
SURELY GOD HAS APPOINTED THE ONE
AS WELL AS THE OTHER.”**

Ecc.7:14

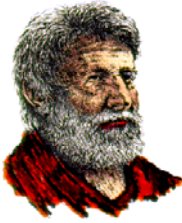
Job and Solomon both embraced the concept that God appoints for His people not only “good” but also “adversity”. We can go to the New Testament and see that Paul, the author of two-thirds of the epistles, also embraced this concept:



**“...FOR I HAVE LEARNED IN WHATEVER STATE I AM, TO BE CONTENT:
I KNOW HOW TO BE ABASED, AND I KNOW HOW TO ABOUND.
EVERYWHERE AND IN ALL THINGS I HAVE LEARNED BOTH TO BE FULL
AND TO BE HUNGRY, BOTH TO ABOUND AND TO SUFFER NEED.
I CAN DO ALL THINGS THROUGH CHRIST WHO STRENGTHENS ME.”**

Phil. 4:11-13

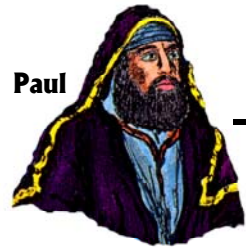
Job



Solomon



Paul



**“FOR BY WISE COUNSEL YOU WILL WAGE YOUR OWN WAR,
AND IN A MULTITUDE OF COUNSELORS THERE IS SAFETY.”**

Prov 24:6

All three of the “wise men” above are giving the same counsel to those who have ears to hear: God appoints for His people both days of prosperity as well as days of adversity. Although we may well prefer the days of prosperity, all spiritual growth comes by means of embracing days of adversity. Unless we come to grips with what these great men of God are stating, we remain in danger of only embracing selected half-truths.

Let us begin now to unfold both of these beautiful aspects of the grace of God. Let us begin by considering the comforting words of having been “accepted” by God into His beloved family. Here is Paul:

**“...HAVING PREDESTINED US TO ADOPTION AS SONS
BY JESUS CHRIST TO HIMSELF,
ACCORDING TO THE GOOD PLEASURE OF HIS WILL,
TO THE PRAISE OF THE GLORY OF HIS GRACE,
BY WHICH HE HAS MADE US
ACCEPTED IN THE BELOVED.
IN HIM WE HAVE REDEMPTION THROUGH HIS
BLOOD, THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS,
ACCORDING TO THE RICHES OF HIS GRACE...”**

Eph. 1:5-7



The preaching of the gospel was meant to be a “Triple A Affair”:

(3)

Accepted

We were not commissioned by God to preach “acceptance by God” with a declaration of “Smile, God loves you.”

The message should begin with the fact that man is alienated from God. This was what John the Baptist and Jesus taught as they preached “repent...” (Matt. 3:2;4:17).



Alienated

(1)

Adopted

(2)

Webster defines alienation as “to be at odds with, separated from, hostile to, unfriendly with, not associated with, no relationship with”. This sums up exactly what Paul means by being alienated from God:

ALIENATION

**“YOU WERE WITHOUT CHRIST,
BEING ALIENS FROM THE COMMONWEALTH OF ISRAEL
AND STRANGERS FROM THE COVENANTS OF PROMISE,
HAVING NO HOPE AND WITHOUT GOD IN THE WORLD.”**

Eph. 2:12

**“...THE GENTILES WALK, IN THE FUTILITY OF THEIR MIND,
HAVING THEIR UNDERSTANDING DARKENED,
BEING ALIENATED FROM THE LIFE OF GOD,
BECAUSE OF THE IGNORANCE THAT IS IN THEM,
BECAUSE OF THE HARDENING OF THEIR HEART...”**

Eph. 4:17-18

**“AND YOU, WHO ONCE WERE ALIENATED AND ENEMIES
IN YOUR MIND BY WICKED WORKS...”**

Col. 1:21

Three times above Paul makes reference to unbeliever’s “alienation” from God. Hardly a situation conducive to telling them, “Smile, God loves you.” is it? Rather, Paul even went as far as to say that those that are alienated are enemies of God in their mind by their wicked works (Col. 1:21). Consider how perfectly this aligns with Old Testament thought as well:

**“GOD IS A JUST JUDGE, AND GOD IS ANGRY WITH THE WICKED
EVERY DAY.”** Psalm 7:11

**“...THE WICKED AND THE ONE WHO LOVES VIOLENCE
HIS SOUL HATES.”** Psalm 11:5

“FOR THE PERVERSE PERSON IS AN ABOMINATION TO THE LORD.”
Prov. 3:32

**“THOSE WHO ARE OF A PERVERSE HEART ARE AN ABOMINATION
TO THE LORD...”** Prov. 11:20

**“EVERYONE WHO IS PROUD IN HEART IS AN ABOMINATION TO
THE LORD...”** Prov. 16:5

Also we error in trying to soften the message of alienation by saying that “God hates the sin, but loves the sinner”. The verses above clearly state how God feels toward the individual, not just his sin. We water down the urgency of the message of repentance when we say what the Word of God does not say. We have taken the message of John 3:16 to extreme interpretation at the expense of verses such as above. Paul tells us that God “...desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim. 2:4). Peter adds “The Lord is... not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance” (2 Pet. 3:9). The knowledge of the truth that brings men to repentance is the message of alienation!

**“THEREFORE WE ARE AMBASSADORS FOR CHRIST,
AS THOUGH GOD WERE PLEADING THROUGH US
WE IMPORE YOU ON CHRIST’S BEHALF,
BE RECONCILED TO GOD.”**

2 Cor. 5:20

Paul states that the church has the call to be “ambassadors for Christ”. In the natural realm, an ambassador is one who carefully and accurately represents another’s views. What kind of message did Paul urge us as ambassadors for Christ to convey? It is plainly stated to be reconciliation with God. To bring the word of reconciliation requires that we first bring forth the message of alienation. As a faithful ambassador, after establishing the thought of alienation, Paul then brings forth the truth that God seeks reconciliation with whosoever is willing:

**“...YOU WERE WITHOUT CHRIST, BEING
ALIENS... HAVING NO HOPE AND WITHOUT
GOD IN THE WORLD. BUT NOW IN CHRIST
JESUS YOU WHO ONCE WERE FAR OFF HAVE
BEEN MADE NEAR BY THE BLOOD OF
CHRIST... THAT HE MIGHT RECONCILE THEM
BOTH TO GOD... THROUGH THE CROSS...
HE CAME AND PREACHED PEACE TO YOU
WHO WERE AFAR OFF...”**

Eph. 2:12-17 excerpts



The good news (“gospel”) is not alienation. Face it: that is bad news. However, the good news is that God is seeking reconciliation with those who are alienated from Him. It is important that we understand that the terms of reconciliation are in the hands of God, not man. We must come to Him on His terms, not on our own. Reconciliation with God the Father can only be obtained through Jesus Christ the Son. This is why Jesus said:



**“I AM
THE WAY,
THE TRUTH
AND THE LIFE.
NO ONE COMES TO THE FATHER
EXCEPT THROUGH ME.”**

Jn. 14:6



In light of that proclamation Paul urges those that are alienated from God, “...we implore you... be reconciled to God. For He (the Father) made Him (the Son) who knew no sin to be sin for us, that (‘in order that’) we might become the righteousness of God in Him... We then, as workers together with Him also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain.. now is the day of salvation.” (2 Cor. 5:20-21, 6:1-2)

It is after this reconciling experience that we come face to face with the second word in our "Triple A Affair", which is

ADOPTION

"HAVING PREDESTINED US TO ADOPTION AS SONS BY JESUS CHRIST TO HIMSELF... TO THE PRAISE OF THE GLORY OF HIS GRACE, BY WHICH HE HAS MADE US ACCEPTED IN THE BELOVED."

Eph. 1:5-6

"...GOD SENT FORTH HIS SON... THAT WE MIGHT RECEIVE THE ADOPTION AS SONS. AND BECAUSE YOU ARE SONS, GOD HAS SENT FORTH THE SPIRIT OF HIS SON INTO YOUR HEARTS, CRYING OUT, 'ABBA, FATHER'!" Gal. 4:4-6

"FOR AS MANY AS ARE LED BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD, THESE ARE THE SONS OF GOD...YOU RECEIVED THE SPIRIT OF ADOPTION BY WHICH WE CRY OUT, 'ABBA, FATHER'". Rom. 8:14-15

It is error to say we are born into the family of God in light of the clear statement to the contrary above. The Word of God does not make such a statement. What it does say is that we are "born of the Spirit" and thereby adopted into the family of God. The passages above taken from three different epistles of Paul make this very clear. God wants us to know we were adopted into His family. Actually, the idea that God has adopted us should be more comforting than being born into His family. I'm sure you heard the story about the little boy who was being teased by his peers because he was adopted. After talking it out with his dad, the next day on the playground when the teasing began anew, he retorted to his nemesis: "Your dad was stuck with you because you were born, but my dad chose me!" This is a major emphasis in the New Testament as well as the Old, we were chosen by God:

"...GOD FROM THE BEGINNING CHOSE YOU FOR SALVATION THROUGH SANCTIFICATION BY THE SPIRIT AND BELIEF IN THE TRUTH, TO WHICH HE CALLED YOU BY OUR GOSPEL..."

2 Thess. 2:13-14

"...JUST AS HE HAS CHOSEN US IN HIM BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD..."

Eph. 1:4

"AS NEWBORN BABES... COMING TO HIM AS TO A LIVING STONE, REJECTED BY MEN, BUT CHOSEN BY GOD AND PRECIOUS..."

1 Pet. 2:2-4

"YOU DID NOT CHOOSE ME, BUT I CHOSE YOU... I CHOSE YOU OUT OF THE WORLD, THEREFORE THE WORLD HATES YOU."

Jn. 15:16,19

"...AS FOR OUR TRANSGRESSIONS, YOU WILL PROVIDE ATONEMENT FOR THEM. BLESSED IS THE MAN YOU CHOOSE, AND CAUSE TO APPROACH YOU, THAT HE MAY DWELL IN YOUR COURTS..."

Psalms 65:3-4

Peter stated, “rejected by men, but chosen by God and precious...” As a little kid, I was never among the chosen ones. I always dreaded the time when the gang chose up sides to play baseball, because they never chose me. In fact, I was usually rejected by both sides. I was lousy at baseball. To now hear “rejected by men, but chosen by God and precious”, certainly brings special comfort to me. Perhaps it does to you as well. We all want to be chosen and precious, especially in God’s sight. Which leads us to this third statement in our triple A Affair:

ACCEPTED

“...HE CHOSE US... PREDESTINED US TO ADOPTION AS SONS,... TO THE PRAISE OF THE GLORY OF HIS GRACE, BY WHICH HE HAS MADE US ACCEPTED IN THE BELOVED.”

Eph. 1:4-6

We come now to this final simplistic statement of Paul in Ephesians stating that we are “accepted in the Beloved”. Only by examining the Greek word translated as “accepted” do we grasp the significance of being highly favored by God. It is the same phrase spoken to Mary, the mother of Jesus. Here is Young’s definition:

Greek: “CHARITOO” – to be highly favored, graciously accepted, chosen, much graced”

Young’s Concordance

So then, we are “highly favored and much graced” by God. We have been “endued with special honor”. We have been “accepted”. Herein lies the awesomeness of God’s love. Although He is “angry with the wicked every day” (Psm. 7:11), and “hates and abhors the bloodthirsty and deceitful” (Psm. 5:4-6), and even though “His soul hates the one who loves violence” (Psm. 11:5), He has adopted and accepted us into His family. Paul speaks of such love:

“FOR WHEN WE WERE STILL WITHOUT STRENGTH, IN DUE TIME CHRIST DIED FOR THE UNGODLY. FOR SCARCELY FOR A RIGHTEOUS MAN WILL ONE DIE; YET PERHAPS FOR A GOOD MAN SOMEONE WOULD EVEN DARE TO DIE. BUT GOD DEMONSTRATES HIS OWN LOVE TOWARD US, IN THAT WHILE WE WERE STILL SINNERS, CHRIST DIED FOR US. MUCH MORE THEN, HAVING NOW BEEN JUSTIFIED BY HIS BLOOD, WE SHALL BE SAVED FROM WRATH THROUGH HIM. FOR IF WHEN WE WERE ENEMIES WE WERE RECONCILED TO GOD THROUGH THE DEATH OF HIS SON, MUCH MORE, HAVING BEEN RECONCILED, WE SHALL BE SAVED BY HIS LIFE... WE ALSO REJOICE IN GOD THROUGH OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, THROUGH WHOM WE HAVE NOW RECEIVED THE RECONCILIATION.”

Romans 5:6-11



Now we can appreciate the magnitude of John 3:16 which states, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. When was such love extended? The word says, "...God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for US" (Rom. 5:8).

At best, man can only express reciprocal love. John the apostle states this clearly, "We love Him because He first loved us" (1 Jn. 4:19). God had to take the first step by loving the unlovable in their sinful state. The love that God expressed was not based on emotional fondness. We have seen how God feels emotionally toward the wicked. He hates, abhors and is angry toward them. Yet, He sent forth His only begotten Son to die for the ungodly. This is agape love. It is the highest form of love and quite unachievable by mere man apart from the Spirit of God abiding in them. This love has, as its foundation, sacrifice and commitment. God was committed to the world He created by His own hand, even though it had totally departed from Him. Isaiah expresses, "For the Lord has spoken:...I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against Me... a people laden with iniquity, a brood of evildoers... they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked to anger the Holy One..." (Isa. 1:2,4).

**"GOD
DEMONSTRATES
HIS OWN LOVE
TOWARD US,
IN THAT
WHILE WE WERE
YET SINNERS,
CHRIST
DIED FOR US...
WHEN WE WERE
STILL WITHOUT
STRENGTH...
CHRIST DIED
FOR
THE UNGODLY."**

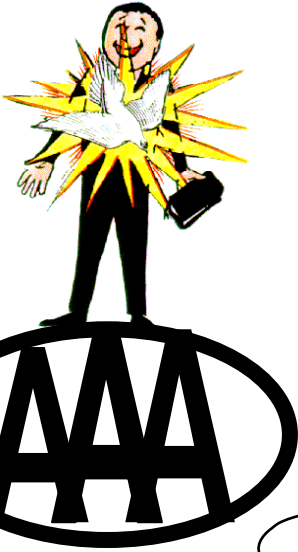
Rom. 5: 8,6

**"...WHEN
WE WERE ENEMIES
WE WERE
RECONCILED
TO GOD
THROUGH
THE DEATH
OF HIS SON..."**

Rom. 5:10



Perhaps this Old Testament type and shadow found in Psalm 40 best depicts what I have been striving to convey so far:



Alienated

**"HE BROUGHT ME UP
OUT OF A HORRIBLE PIT,
OUT OF THE MIRY CLAY..."**

Psalm 40:2a

Adopted

**"AND SET MY FEET UPON A ROCK,
AND ESTABLISHED MY STEPS..."**

Psalm 40:2b

Accepted

**"HE HAS PUT A NEW SONG IN MY MOUTH.
PRAISE TO OUR GOD... MANY WILL SEE IT...
AND WILL TRUST IN THE LORD."**

Psalm 40:3

Is this the end of the story, or is it just the beginning? Does God have a purpose in adopting and accepting us into the beloved family of God? I think so. We only need to refresh our memory with the definition of grace to know that there is more to the story of amazing grace than what we have considered under the concept of acceptance. God is also looking for the reflection of His grace to be manifest in our lives:

**NEW
BIRTH
RECEIVED...**

**"DIVINE
INFLUENCE
UPON
THE HEART"**

GRACE

**"ITS
REFLECTION
IN
THE LIFE"**

**NEW
LIFE
LIVED...**

**"...AND HE DIED FOR ALL,
THAT THOSE WHO LIVE
SHOULD NO LONGER LIVE FOR THEMSELVES,
BUT FOR HIM WHO DIED FOR THEM...
THEREFORE IF ANYONE IS IN CHRIST, HE IS A NEW CREATION:
OLD THINGS HAVE PASSED AWAY;
AND BEHOLD,
ALL THINGS HAVE BECOME NEW."**

2 Cor. 5:15-17 excerpts

The message of acceptance certainly produces "divine influence on the heart" of those moved by such love. However, it is the message of adversity that will produce the other half of the meaning of grace in us, "its reflection in the life."



Paul



Peter



ACCEPTED UNTO **ADVERSITY**
 IN THE BELOVED... OF THE BROTHERHOOD...

**"I AM CONVINCED AND SURE OF THIS VERY THING,
 THAT HE WHO BEGAN A GOOD WORK IN YOU WILL
 CONTINUE UNTIL THE DAY OF JESUS CHRIST-RIGHT UP TO
 THE TIME OF HIS RETURN-DEVELOPING AND PERFECTING
 AND BRINGING IT TO FULL COMPLETION IN YOU...
 BECAUSE YOU ARE ALL PARTAKERS...
 OF GRACE."
 Phil. 1:6-7
 Amplified**

**"SHALL WE INDEED
 ACCEPT GOOD FROM GOD,
 AND SHALL WE NOT ACCEPT ADVERSITY?..."
 Job 2:10**

**"MOST
 ASSUREDLY,
 I SAY UNTO YOU,
 UNLESS
 ONE IS
 BORN AGAIN,
 HE CANNOT SEE...
 NOR ENTER
 THE
 KINGDOM
 OF GOD."
 Jn. 3:3,5**

**"WE BOAST OF YOU
 AMONG THE CHURCHES
 OF GOD FOR YOUR
 PATIENCE AND FAITH IN
 ALL YOUR PERSECUTIONS
 AND TRIBULATIONS THAT
 YOU ENDURE, WHICH IS
 MANIFEST EVIDENCE OF
 THE RIGHTEOUS
 JUDGMENT OF GOD,
 THAT YOU MAY BE
 COUNTED WORTHY OF
 THE KINGDOM
 OF GOD,
 FOR WHICH YOU ALSO
 SUFFER."
 2 Thess. 1:4-5**

Both of the above passages speak of the "kingdom of God". One speaks about how you enter it and the other what happens to you once you are in it. Both are aspects of the grace of God. One deals with receiving acceptance and the other with receiving adversity. Can we, as Job states, accept the one (acceptance) and not the other (adversity)?

For the point of illustration, let me make a common statement about salvation by grace. Next to it I am going to substitute the word adversity in place of salvation. We will find that we are not as comfortable with accepting such a substitution as we are with its more common counterpart:

SALVATION

**IS A GIFT OF GOD'S GRACE.
IT IS
THE UNMERITED FAVOR OF GOD.
YOU DO NOT HAVE TO EARN IT-
HE GIVES IT FREELY TO ALL
WHO CALL UPON HIS NAME."**

ADVERSITY

**IS A GIFT OF GOD'S GRACE.
IT IS
THE UNMERITED FAVOR OF GOD.
YOU DO NOT HAVE TO EARN IT-
HE GIVES IT FREELY TO ALL
WHO CALL UPON HIS NAME."**



**"THE GOD
OF ALL GRACE"**



**"YOUR ADVERSARY
THE DEVIL"**

ADVERSITY



**"RESIST HIM
STEADFAST IN THE FAITH"**

**"BE SOBER, BE VIGILANT;
BECAUSE YOUR ADVERSARY THE DEVIL
WALKS ABOUT LIKE A ROARING LION, SEEKING WHOM HE MAY DEVOUR.
RESIST HIM, STEADFAST IN THE FAITH, KNOWING THAT THE SAME
SUFFERINGS ARE EXPERIENCED BY YOUR BROTHERHOOD IN THE WORLD.
BUT MAY THE GOD OF ALL GRACE,
WHO CALLED US TO HIS ETERNAL GLORY BY CHRIST JESUS,
AFTER YOU HAVE SUFFERED A WHILE,
PERFECT, ESTABLISH, STRENGTHEN, AND SETTLE YOU.
TO HIM BE THE GLORY AND THE DOMINION FOREVER AND EVER. AMEN."**

1 Peter 5:8-11

What is portrayed above is as much a part of amazing grace as is the initial act of salvation. We receive adversity through our adversary. Note however, it is the God of all grace who has determined that after we suffer a while, the end result shall bring us to the point of being "perfected, established, strengthened, and settled".

The New Testament writers give great emphasis to the perfecting work of adversity. Let us consider some examples to prove that statement:

THE APOSTLE JAMES:

“MY BRETHREN, COUNT IT ALL JOY WHEN YOU FALL INTO VARIOUS TRIALS, KNOWING THAT THE TESTING OF YOUR FAITH PRODUCES PATIENCE (“ENDURANCE”). BUT LET PATIENCE HAVE ITS PERFECT WORK, THAT YOU MAY BE PERFECT AND COMPLETE, LACKING NOTHING.”

James 1:2-4

“BUT LET ENDURANCE AND STEADFASTNESS AND PATIENCE HAVE FULL PLAY AND DO A THOROUGH WORK, SO THAT YOU MAY BE A PEOPLE PERFECTLY AND FULLY DEVELOPED WITH NO DEFECTS, LACKING IN NOTHING.”

(Amplified James 1:4)

THE APOSTLE PETER:

“IN THIS YOU GREATLY REJOICE, THOUGH NOW FOR A LITTLE WHILE, IF NEED BE, YOU HAVE BEEN GRIEVED BY VARIOUS TRIALS, THAT THE GENUINENESS OF YOUR FAITH... THOUGH IT IS TESTED BY FIRE, MAY BE FOUND TO PRAISE, HONOR, AND GLORY AT THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST...”

1 Peter 1:6-7

“...NOW FOR A LITTLE WHILE YOU MAY BE DISTRESSED BY TRIALS AND SUFFER TEMPTATIONS, SO THAT THE GENUINENESS OF YOUR FAITH MAY BE TESTED... THIS PROVING OF YOUR FAITH IS INTENDED TO REDOUND TO YOUR PRAISE AND GLORY AND HONOR WHEN JESUS CHRIST... IS REVEALED.”

1 Pet. 1:6-7 Amplified

THE APOSTLE PAUL:

“THEREFORE, HAVING BEEN JUSTIFIED BY FAITH, WE HAVE PEACE WITH GOD... WE HAVE ACCESS BY FAITH INTO THIS GRACE IN WHICH WE STAND, AND REJOICE IN THE HOPE OF THE GLORY OF GOD. AND NOT ONLY THAT, BUT WE ALSO GLORY IN TRIBULATIONS, KNOWING THAT TRIBULATION PRODUCES PERSEVERANCE; AND... CHARACTER...”

Rom. 5:1-4

“MOREOVER LET US ALSO BE FULL OF JOY NOW! LET US EXULT AND TRIUMPH IN OUR TROUBLES AND REJOICE IN OUR SUFFERINGS, KNOWING THAT PRESSURE AND AFFLICTION AND HARDSHIP PRODUCE PATIENT AND UNSWERVING ENDURANCE. AND ENDURANCE DEVELOPS MATURITY OF CHARACTER (THAT IS APPROVED FAITH AND TRIED INTEGRITY)...”

(Amplified Rom. 5:3-4)

THE FRUIT OF **ADVERSITY**

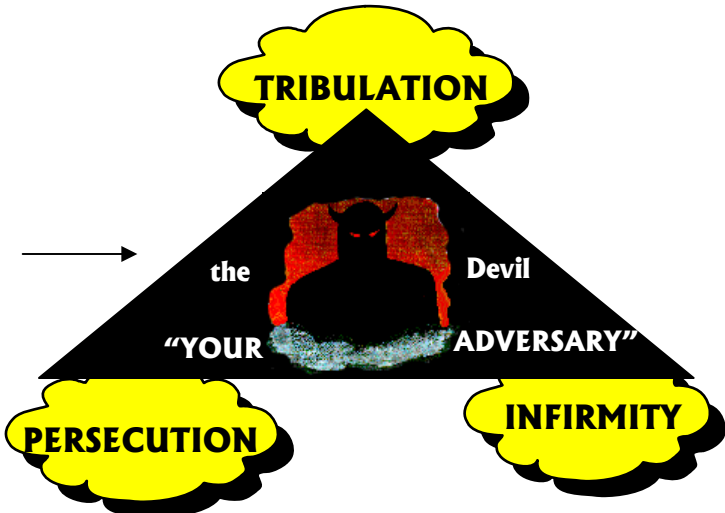
1. **"PATIENCE ("ENDURANCE")..."**
2. **"UNSWERVING ENDURANCE/ MATURITY OF CHARACTER..."**
3. **"LACKING IN NOTHING..."**
4. **"APPROVED FAITH AND TRIED INTEGRITY..."**
5. **"THE PROVING OF THE GENUINENESS OF YOUR FAITH..."**
6. **"A PEOPLE PERFECTLY AND FULLY DEVELOPED..."**
7. **"REDOUNDING TO YOUR PRAISE, HONOR AND GLORY, AT THE COMING OF CHRIST..."**

Considering not only the testimony of three of the New Testament apostles pertaining to adversity, but also the amazing work of perfection it accomplishes in us, how can we embrace such nonsense being taught to God's people that adversity is never the work of God's hand?

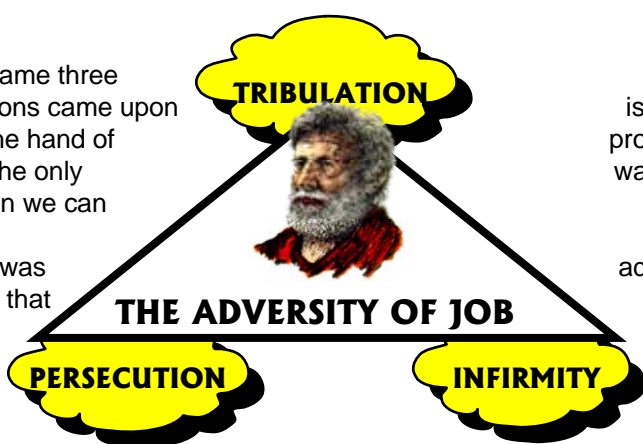
Hear this: The devil is God's devil. That makes the faith for prosperity people real mad, but in reality, that is exactly what the Word of God presents. I do not imply that Satan is willingly working along with God in order to perfect the saints, but I am implying that God uses the devil's tactics to accomplish His purposes in His own people through the adversity that Satan causes.

No greater illustration of that truth is there other than the story of Job. It is an account that is brutalized by the faith for prosperity teachers in an attempt to convey that which Job feared the most, came upon him. Nothing could be further from the truth.

We would all agree that Satan as our adversary functions in these three categories. The New Testament abounds with evidence of this truth.



These same three oppressions came upon Job by the hand of Satan. The only distinction we can make is that Job was unaware that it was Satan at work.



His story is laced with proof that Job was willing to serve a God that administered goodness and adversity. (Job. 2:10).

Perhaps no one shall ever again experience the degree of adversity the likes of Job. However, what he did suffer helps us to hold a better perspective when we find ourselves under the gun of this trio of assault. However, our trials seem puny compared to his. In the New Testament, we are given more enlightenment than Job possessed. We know that Satan is our adversary. Peter plainly declared that:

**"BE SOBER, BE VIGILANT;
BECAUSE YOUR ADVERSARY THE DEVIL
WALKS ABOUT LIKE A ROARING LION,
SEEKING WHOM HE MAY DEVOUR..."**

1 Pet. 5:8



Job suffered in all three areas of adversity. The fact he suffered immense tribulation is plainly stated in the first chapter:

"NOW THERE WAS A DAY WHEN HIS SONS AND DAUGHTERS WERE EATING AND DRINKING WINE IN THEIR OLDEST BROTHER'S HOUSE; AND A MESSENGER CAME TO JOB AND SAID, "THE OXEN WERE PLOWING AND THE DONKEYS FEEDING BESIDE THEM, WHEN THE SABEANS RAIDED THEM AND TOOK THEM AWAY -- INDEED THEY HAVE KILLED THE SERVANTS WITH THE EDGE OF THE SWORD; AND I ALONE HAVE ESCAPED TO TELL YOU!"

WHILE HE WAS STILL SPEAKING, ANOTHER ALSO CAME AND SAID, "THE FIRE OF GOD FELL FROM HEAVEN AND BURNED UP THE SHEEP AND THE SERVANTS, AND CONSUMED THEM; AND I ALONE HAVE ESCAPED TO TELL YOU!"

WHILE HE WAS STILL SPEAKING, ANOTHER ALSO CAME AND SAID, "THE CHALDEANS FORMED THREE BANDS, RAIDED THE CAMELS AND TOOK THEM AWAY, YES, AND KILLED THE SERVANTS WITH THE EDGE OF THE SWORD; AND I ALONE HAVE ESCAPED TO TELL YOU!"

WHILE HE WAS STILL SPEAKING, ANOTHER ALSO CAME AND SAID, "YOUR SONS AND DAUGHTERS WERE EATING AND DRINKING WINE IN THEIR OLDEST BROTHER'S HOUSE, AND SUDDENLY A GREAT WIND CAME FROM ACROSS THE WILDERNESS AND STRUCK THE FOUR CORNERS OF THE HOUSE, AND IT FELL ON THE YOUNG PEOPLE, AND THEY ARE DEAD; AND I ALONE HAVE ESCAPED TO TELL YOU!"

THEN JOB AROSE, TORE HIS ROBE, AND SHAVED HIS HEAD; AND HE FELL TO THE GROUND AND WORSHIPED. AND HE SAID: "NAKED I CAME FROM MY MOTHER'S WOMB, AND NAKED SHALL I RETURN THERE. THE LORD GAVE, AND THE LORD HAS TAKEN AWAY; BLESSED BE THE NAME OF THE LORD." IN ALL THIS JOB DID NOT SIN NOR CHARGE GOD WITH WRONG."

Job 1:13-22

It is also plainly stated who was behind all this tribulation.

It was Satan the adversary:

"...THE LORD SAID TO SATAN, "HAVE YOU CONSIDERED MY SERVANT JOB, THAT THERE IS NONE LIKE HIM ON THE EARTH, A BLAMELESS AND UPRIGHT MAN, ONE WHO FEARS GOD AND SHUNS EVIL?" SO SATAN ANSWERED THE LORD AND SAID, "DOES JOB FEAR GOD FOR NOTHING? HAVE YOU NOT MADE A HEDGE AROUND HIM, AROUND HIS HOUSEHOLD, AND AROUND ALL THAT HE HAS ON EVERY SIDE? YOU HAVE BLESSED THE WORK OF HIS HANDS, AND HIS POSSESSIONS HAVE INCREASED IN THE LAND. BUT NOW, STRETCH OUT YOUR HAND AND TOUCH ALL THAT HE HAS, AND HE WILL SURELY CURSE YOU TO YOUR FACE!" AND THE LORD SAID TO SATAN, "BEHOLD, ALL THAT HE HAS IS IN YOUR POWER; ONLY DO NOT LAY A HAND ON HIS PERSON." SO SATAN WENT OUT FROM THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD."

Job 1:6-12

We also can see that God is involved as well. Satan has challenged God to put Job to a test. The accusation is that Job serves God for what he can get. Note that the challenge Satan makes to God is if He allows Job to suffer adversity, he will curse Him to his face. However, Job passed the test!

Chapter two takes us into Round Two of Job's adversity. Again the opening verses tell us the reason and the cause for what follows:

"THEN THE LORD SAID TO SATAN, "HAVE YOU CONSIDERED MY SERVANT JOB, THAT THERE IS NONE LIKE HIM ON THE EARTH, A BLAMELESS AND UPRIGHT MAN, ONE WHO FEARS GOD AND SHUNS EVIL? AND STILL HE HOLDS FAST TO HIS INTEGRITY, ALTHOUGH YOU INCITED ME AGAINST HIM, TO DESTROY HIM WITHOUT CAUSE." SO SATAN ANSWERED THE LORD AND SAID, "SKIN FOR SKIN! YES, ALL THAT A MAN HAS HE WILL GIVE FOR HIS LIFE. BUT STRETCH OUT YOUR HAND NOW, AND TOUCH HIS BONE AND HIS FLESH, AND HE WILL SURELY CURSE YOU TO YOUR FACE!" AND THE LORD SAID TO SATAN, "BEHOLD, HE IS IN YOUR HAND, BUT SPARE HIS LIFE."

SO SATAN WENT OUT FROM THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD, AND STRUCK JOB WITH PAINFUL BOILS FROM THE SOLE OF HIS FOOT TO THE CROWN OF HIS HEAD. AND HE TOOK FOR HIMSELF A POTSHARD WITH WHICH TO SCRAPE HIMSELF WHILE HE SAT IN THE MIDST OF THE ASHES.

THEN HIS WIFE SAID TO HIM, "DO YOU STILL HOLD FAST TO YOUR INTEGRITY? CURSE GOD AND DIE!" BUT HE SAID TO HER, "YOU SPEAK AS ONE OF THE FOOLISH WOMEN SPEAKS. SHALL WE INDEED ACCEPT GOOD FROM GOD, AND SHALL WE NOT ACCEPT ADVERSITY?" IN ALL THIS JOB DID NOT SIN WITH HIS LIPS."

Job 2:3-10

Two things surface in this chapter which are added to the tribulation of Chapter One. They are infirmity and persecution. The infirmity comes directly from Satan's hand (vs. 7) but the persecution comes through Job's wife! What was the original challenge? Satan said twice to God that adversity would cause Job to curse God to His face. Note his wife's piercing words:

**"THEN HIS WIFE SAID TO HIM:
'DO YOU STILL HOLD TO YOUR INTEGRITY?
CURSE GOD AND DIE!'"**

Job 2:9

Satan used this very tactic in his attack of Jesus as well as Job:

“THEN PETER TOOK HIM ASIDE AND BEGAN TO REBUKE HIM, SAYING ‘FAR BE IT FROM YOU, LORD; THIS SHALL NOT HAPPEN TO YOU!’ BUT HE TURNED AND SAID TO PETER, ‘GET BEHIND ME, SATAN!...’”

Matt. 16:22-23

Peter’s well-meaning counsel to Jesus was conceived by Satan himself! The lesson is clear in these two examples. Persecution often comes through well-meaning but misguided saints! If all of this isn’t enough for Job, we read in the next verse about the arrival of Job’s well-meaning friends. Three of the four were bringing ill-advised counsel contrary to God’s ways. They hammered Job with the concept that his sufferings were due to his sins. No way was this adversity from God! What pressure on Job! However, we need only to jump to the end of the story to see that God justified Job and reproved his friends for their bad counsel:

“AND SO IT WAS, AFTER THE LORD HAD SPOKEN THESE WORDS TO JOB, THAT THE LORD SAID TO ELIPHAZ THE TEMANITE, “MY WRATH IS AROUSED AGAINST YOU AND YOUR TWO FRIENDS, FOR YOU HAVE NOT SPOKEN OF ME WHAT IS RIGHT, AS MY SERVANT JOB HAS. NOW THEREFORE, TAKE FOR YOURSELVES SEVEN BULLS AND SEVEN RAMS, GO TO MY SERVANT JOB, AND OFFER UP FOR YOURSELVES A BURNT OFFERING; AND MY SERVANT JOB SHALL PRAY FOR YOU. FOR I WILL ACCEPT HIM, LEST I DEAL WITH YOU ACCORDING TO YOUR FOLLY; BECAUSE YOU HAVE NOT SPOKEN OF ME WHAT IS RIGHT, AS MY SERVANT JOB HAS.” SO ELIPHAZ THE TEMANITE AND BILDAD THE SHUHITE AND ZOPHAR THE NAAMATHITE WENT AND DID AS THE LORD COMMANDED THEM; FOR THE LORD HAD ACCEPTED JOB. AND THE LORD RESTORED JOB’S LOSSES WHEN HE PRAYED FOR HIS FRIENDS. INDEED THE LORD GAVE JOB TWICE AS MUCH AS HE HAD BEFORE. THEN ALL HIS BROTHERS, ALL HIS SISTERS, AND ALL THOSE WHO HAD BEEN HIS ACQUAINTANCES BEFORE, CAME TO HIM AND ATE FOOD WITH HIM IN HIS HOUSE; AND THEY CONSOLED HIM AND COMFORTED HIM FOR ALL THE ADVERSITY THAT THE LORD HAD BROUGHT UPON HIM. EACH ONE GAVE HIM A PIECE OF SILVER AND EACH A RING OF GOLD. Now the LORD BLESSED THE LATTER DAYS OF JOB MORE THAN HIS BEGINNING; FOR HE HAD FOURTEEN THOUSAND SHEEP, SIX THOUSAND CAMELS, ONE THOUSAND YOKE OF OXEN, AND ONE THOUSAND FEMALE DONKEYS. HE ALSO HAD SEVEN SONS AND THREE DAUGHTERS. AND HE CALLED THE NAME OF THE FIRST JEMIMAH, THE NAME OF THE SECOND KEZIAH, AND THE NAME OF THE THIRD KEREN-HAPPUCH. IN ALL THE LAND WERE FOUND NO WOMEN SO BEAUTIFUL AS THE DAUGHTERS OF JOB; AND THEIR FATHER GAVE THEM AN INHERITANCE AMONG THEIR BROTHERS. AFTER THIS JOB LIVED ONE HUNDRED AND FORTY YEARS, AND SAW HIS CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN FOR FOUR GENERATIONS. SO JOB DIED, OLD AND FULL OF DAYS.”

Job 42:7-17

Job was made better through his God-appointed adversity. Can we, the Church, dismiss such a detailed account of the purposes of adversity as non-relevant theology? Can we hold to a position that it all happened to him simply because he expressed fear that it would happen? Nonsense!

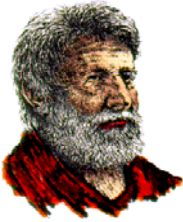
Can we not see that the moral to the story of Job lies in the fact that Satan, the accuser of the brethren (Rev. 12:10), is still coming before the throne of God with the same accusations against the brethren today, that he brought against Job? He is still challenging that God's people serve Him for what they can get, but if He would allow adversity into their life, they would curse Him to His face. Can we not see that this is the real message God wants to impart through the life of Job? Paul seemed to understand what God had in mind as the main purpose of God for the church:



**“TO THE INTENT THAT NOW
THE MANIFOLD WISDOM OF GOD MIGHT
BE MADE KNOWN BY THE CHURCH
TO THE PRINCIPALITIES AND POWERS
IN THE HEAVENLY PLACES...”**

Eph. 3:10

God has appointed the church to see that evil principalities and powers in the heavenly places realize God's wisdom in bringing forth the church! What does Paul tell the church it is wrestling against? Is it not “principalities, powers... in heavenly places”? (Eph. 6:12). May God help us to see that adversity is a test equal to, and identical to what Job experienced. Can't you hear God saying to Satan of His church on earth the same testimony He spoke of Job:



JOB

**“THEN THE LORD
SAID TO SATAN,
“HAVE YOU CONSIDERED
MY SERVANT JOB,
THAT THERE IS
NONE LIKE HIM
ON THE EARTH,
A BLAMELESS
AND UPRIGHT MAN,
ONE WHO FEARS GOD
AND SHUNS EVIL?”**

Job 1:8



THE CHURCH

The parallels between Job and the church are obvious to see. Are we not also, like Job, called to be the servants of the Lord, a special people on the face of the earth like no other? Are we not also, like Job, called to bear the unique reputation of being a blameless, upright people who fear God and shun evil? Have we not proven that such adversity as Job experienced belongs to the church as well? Was not Job being set before Satan (head of all fallen principalities and powers) as an example of what one can accomplish as a dedicated lover of God? Are we not set before the evil principalities and powers to demonstrate the manifold wisdom of God in choosing us as His church?

Consider once more the suffering church of which Paul often boasted. Their faith was steadily growing through the adversity which they suffered (2 Thess. 1:3).

“WE BOAST OF YOU AMONG THE CHURCHES OF GOD FOR YOUR PATIENCE AND FAITH IN ALL YOUR PERSECUTIONS AND TRIBULATIONS THAT YOU ENDURE,



WHICH IS MANIFEST EVIDENCE OF THE RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENT OF GOD, THAT YOU MAY BE COUNTED WORTHY OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD, FOR WHICH YOU ALSO SUFFER.”

2 Thess. 1:4-5

Unlike the saints Paul commended above, multitudes of God's people are rather being taught that if they just have faith like God has, they will be kept safe in an environmentally controlled, protective capsule from any and all adversity. If they can avoid expressing any fear, such as plagued Job, all will be well. However, let us not forget that Job was within a protective hedge (Job 1:10) which God removed to allow Satan to enter to test the faith of Job.



What would Paul say of such soft theology as presented above? I believe his words would be the same as he spoke to Galatia:

“I MARVEL THAT YOU ARE TURNING AWAY... TO A DIFFERENT GOSPEL... (WHO) PERVERT THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST... AS WE HAVE SAID BEFORE, SO NOW I SAY AGAIN, IF ANYONE PREACHES ANY OTHER GOSPEL TO YOU THAN WHAT YOU HAVE RECEIVED, LET HIM BE ACCURSED.”

Gal. 1:6-9 excerpts

Let us not forget that God invested two-thirds of the New Testament epistles to Paul. His writings abound with a message of the grace of God functioning in, and through adversity.

**"IF YOU FAINT IN THE DAY OF ADVERSITY,
YOUR STRENGTH IS SMALL."**

Prov. 24:10

"YOU THEREFORE, MY SON, BE STRONG IN THE GRACE THAT IS IN CHRIST JESUS... YOU THEREFORE MUST ENDURE HARDSHIP AS A GOOD SOLDIER OF JESUS CHRIST."

2 Tim. 1:1,3

"...A MESSENGER OF SATAN (WAS GIVEN) TO BUFFET ME...I PLEADED WITH THE LORD THREE TIMES THAT IT MIGHT DEPART FROM ME. AND HE SAID TO ME, 'MY GRACE IS SUFFICIENT FOR YOU, FOR MY STRENGTH IS MADE PERFECT IN WEAKNESS.' THEREFORE I WILL RATHER BOAST IN MY INFIRMITIES, THAT THE POWER OF CHRIST MAY REST UPON ME. THEREFORE I TAKE PLEASURE IN INFIRMITIES, IN REPROACHES, IN NEEDS, IN PERSECUTIONS, IN DISTRESSES, FOR CHRIST'S SAKE. FOR WHEN I AM WEAK, THEN I AM STRONG."

2 Cor. 12:7-10

**"FOR THE WEAPONS OF OUR WARFARE ARE...
MIGHTY IN GOD FOR PULLING DOWN STRONGHOLDS..."**

2 Cor. 10:4

"FINALLY, MY BRETHREN, BE STRONG IN THE LORD AND IN THE POWER OF HIS MIGHT. PUT ON THE WHOLE ARMOR OF GOD, THAT YOU MAY BE ABLE TO STAND AGAINST THE WILES OF THE DEVIL... TAKE UP THE WHOLE ARMOR OF GOD, THAT YOU MAY BE ABLE TO WITHSTAND IN THE EVIL DAY, AND HAVING DONE ALL, TO STAND."

Eph. 6:10-13 excerpts

"I CAN DO ALL THINGS THROUGH CHRIST WHO STRENGTHENS ME."

Phil. 4:13

**"LET US THEREFORE COME BOLDLY TO THE THRONE OF GRACE,
THAT WE MAY... FIND GRACE TO HELP IN TIME OF NEED."**

Heb. 4:16

**"...THAT HE WOULD GRANT YOU,
ACCORDING TO THE RICHES OF HIS GLORY,
TO BE STRENGTHENED WITH MIGHT THROUGH HIS SPIRIT
IN THE INNER MAN..."**

Eph. 3:16

"...THAT YOU MAY KNOW... WHAT IS THE EXCEEDING GREATNESS OF HIS POWER TOWARD US WHO BELIEVE, ACCORDING TO THE WORKING OF HIS MIGHTY POWER..."

Eph. 1:18-19

If we are fainting in the day of adversity, then we must agree with Solomon, our strength is small. Paul does not embrace a powerless gospel. Much of the above has to do with spiritual warfare. God has given us all we need to fight the good fight of faith. It is found in embracing God's enabling grace.



**“RESIST HIM
STEADFAST
IN
THE FAITH.”**

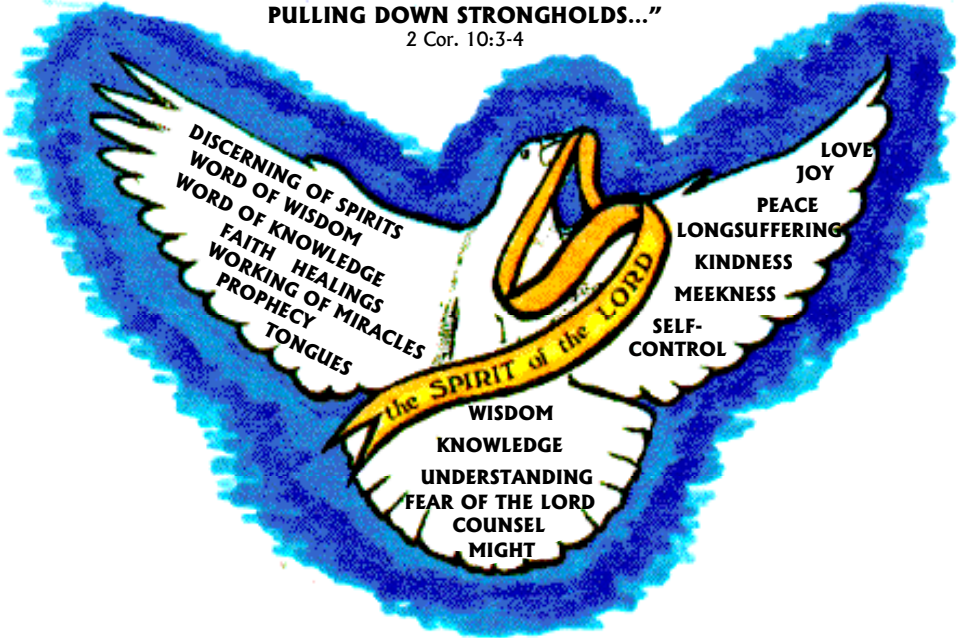
2 Pet. 5:9



To accomplish that,
we will need all of our weapons of warfare:

**“FOR THOUGH WE WALK IN THE FLESH
WE DO NOT WAR ACCORDING TO THE FLESH .
FOR THE WEAPONS OF OUR WARFARE ARE NOT CARNAL
BUT MIGHTY IN GOD FOR
PULLING DOWN STRONGHOLDS...”**

2 Cor. 10:3-4



DISCERNING OF SPIRITS
WORD OF WISDOM
WORD OF KNOWLEDGE
FAITH HEALINGS
WORKING OF MIRACLES
PROPHECY
TONGUES

LOVE
JOY
PEACE
LONGSUFFERING
KINDNESS
MEEKNESS
SELF-CONTROL

WISDOM
KNOWLEDGE
UNDERSTANDING
FEAR OF THE LORD
COUNSEL
MIGHT

“FINALLY, MY BRETHREN, BE STRONG IN THE LORD AND IN THE POWER OF HIS MIGHT. PUT ON THE WHOLE ARMOR OF GOD, THAT YOU MAY BE ABLE TO STAND AGAINST THE WILES OF THE DEVIL. FOR WE DO NOT WRESTLE AGAINST FLESH AND BLOOD, BUT AGAINST PRINCIPALITIES, AGAINST POWERS, AGAINST THE RULERS OF THE DARKNESS OF THIS AGE, AGAINST SPIRITUAL HOSTS OF WICKEDNESS IN THE HEAVENLY PLACES. THEREFORE TAKE UP THE WHOLE ARMOR OF GOD, THAT YOU MAY BE ABLE TO WITHSTAND IN THE EVIL DAY, AND HAVING DONE ALL, TO STAND.

STAND THEREFORE, HAVING GIRDED YOUR WAIST WITH TRUTH, HAVING PUT ON THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, AND HAVING SHOD YOUR FEET WITH THE PREPARATION OF THE GOSPEL OF PEACE; ABOVE ALL, TAKING THE SHIELD OF FAITH WITH WHICH YOU WILL BE ABLE TO QUENCH ALL THE FIERY DARTS OF THE WICKED ONE. AND TAKE THE HELMET OF SALVATION, AND THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT, WHICH IS THE WORD OF GOD; PRAYING ALWAYS WITH ALL PRAYER AND SUPPLICATION IN THE SPIRIT, BEING WATCHFUL TO THIS END WITH ALL PERSEVERANCE AND SUPPLICATION FOR ALL THE SAINTS...”

Eph. 6:10-19

Let us add now to our dual-spelling of grace our fourth acronym to help us understand the whole counsel of God pertaining to this subject:

"DIVINE INFLUENCE UPON THE HEART"

"ITS REFLECTION IN THE LIFE"

GRACE



SAVING GRACE

ENABLING GRACE



PARDON BY THE CHRIST



POWER BY THE HOLY SPIRIT

**GIFT
REDEEM
ACCEPTED
CROSS
E**

**GROW
REIGN
ADVERSITY
CROSS
E**

COMFORT

CONFRONT



UNDERSTANDING THE NEED TO BE

DOUBLE-CROSSED

IN THIS LIFE

THE CROSS OF CHRIST...

THE CROSS OF THE CHRISTIAN...



UNDERSTANDING THE NEED TO BE
DOUBLE-CROSSED



IN THIS LIFE



**"...LOOKING UNTO JESUS,
THE AUTHOR AND
FINISHER OF OUR FAITH,
WHO FOR THE JOY THAT
WAS SET BEFORE HIM
ENDURED
THE CROSS..."**

Heb. 12:2

**"AND HE
WHO DOES NOT
TAKE UP HIS CROSS
AND FOLLOW AFTER
ME IS NOT WORTHY
OF ME."**

Matt. 10:38

Jesus embraced His cross for our sake, but He also calls us to embrace our cross for His sake. Like the other truths we have examined so far, this message also suffers from only proclaiming half-the-truth. We do not lack the preaching of His cross on our behalf, but we lack the emphasis Jesus Himself placed on taking up our cross for His sake. My purpose in this section of teaching is to convince you of the need of embracing a double-cross mentality as best depicting the normal Christian life.

THE CROSS OF CHRIST

The cross of Christ is the crux of Christianity. In the face of the intellectuals of his day, Paul zeroed in on a simplistic, basic message of the cross:

"FOR CHRIST... SENT ME TO PREACH THE GOSPEL, NOT WITH WISDOM OF WORDS, LEST THE CROSS OF CHRIST SHOULD BE MADE OF NO EFFECT. FOR THE MESSAGE OF THE CROSS IS FOOLISHNESS TO THOSE WHO ARE PERISHING, BUT TO US WHO ARE BEING SAVED IT IS THE POWER OF GOD." 1 Cor. 1:17-18

"BUT GOD FORBID THAT I SHOULD GLORY EXCEPT IN THE CROSS OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, BY WHOM THE WORLD HAS BEEN CRUCIFIED TO ME, AND I TO THE WORLD." Gal. 6:14

"...AND BY HIM TO RECONCILE ALL THINGS TO HIMSELF... HAVING MADE PEACE THROUGH THE BLOOD OF HIS CROSS." Col. 1:20

"FOR I AM DETERMINED NOT TO KNOW ANYTHING AMONG YOU EXCEPT JESUS CHRIST AND HIM CRUCIFIED." 1 Cor. 2:2



**"HE
GAVE
HIMSELF
FOR OUR SINS..."**

Galatians 1:4

Jesus "...gave Himself for our sins that He might deliver us from this present evil age..." (Gal. 1:4). The cross was the means by which He gave Himself, but it was the blood of His cross which reconciled us to the Father (Col. 1:20). The cross is not meant to be revered. It was a means to an end to accomplish the purposes of God. By it we are ever-reminded of the cost of our redemption.

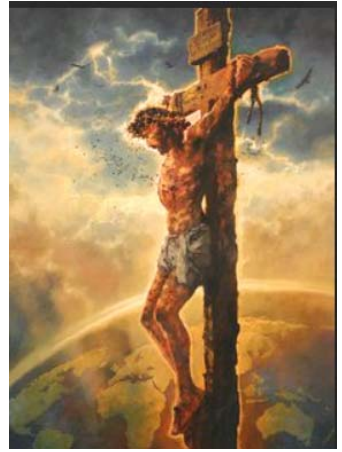
**"AND WHEN THEY HAD
COME TO THE PLACE
CALLED CALVARY,
THERE THEY
CRUCIFIED HIM..."**

Luke 23:33

**"...HE HUMBLED HIMSELF
AND BECAME OBEDIENT
TO THE POINT OF DEATH,
EVEN THE DEATH OF
THE CROSS."**

Phil. 2:8

Let us take a look at the cost of our redemption. Consider these vivid and frank excerpts from an article describing Jesus' death by crucifixion. Not only will it show us the pain and agony He suffered for us, but it will help us to grasp the significance of the meaning of taking up our own cross.



"Crucified! No death is so thorough. No shame is so complete.

First, there was the scourging.

The scourging post was two feet high. An iron ring, placed close to the top, projected from both sides. Clothing was ripped away from a prisoner so that he stood naked. Roman lictors were professionals. They confined their labours to the fine, brutal art of scourging, and they could beat a victim until only the barest spark of life remained in the prisoner. Wrists were firmly shackled to the iron rings. Then the victim was stretched, face down, with his feet pointing away from the post. The Roman scourge was a flagra, a short-handled whip consisting of several thin iron chains which ended in small weights.

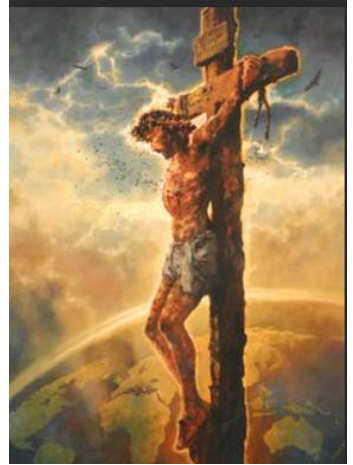
Scourging was called the "little death". It preceded the "big death": Crucifixion. Even the tension of awaiting the first blow is cruel. The body is rigid. The muscles knot in tormenting cramps. Colour drains from the cheeks. Lips are drawn tight against the teeth. As the whip descends, the chains fan out across the back, and each link cuts through the skin and deep into the flesh. The weights crash with bruising force into the ribs and curl tortuously around the chest. When a man is scourged there is pain beyond the memory of pain. Sweat bursts from the brow and stings the eyes. At each stroke of the flagra, a victim's body twitches like a beheaded chicken. The second stroke patterns the back and half of the chest with a V-shaped network of small cuts. Only the Son of God could hold back the high-pitched wail of unbearable agony. The very juice of life is torn away with every lash. There is only the blinding, burning pain as cruel whips whistle again and again through the air and across the back and shoulders. The flagra can flay a man alive. Under Hebrew law, the strokes were limited to 39. Roman punishment was not so limited. There was only one rule for the lictor who scourged a man about to be crucified: he must not die. A spark of life must be sustained for the agony on the cross. Men have bitten their tongues in two under such beatings. Only blessed unconsciousness could bring relief.

*The next step was the parade
to the execution ground.*

Roman politicians always liked to make examples of condemned men. The long, slow parade along public streets was designed to serve as a warning to others that Rome dealt quickly and mercilessly.

A centurion usually served as the executioner.

While four soldiers held the prisoner, he placed the sharp five-inch iron spike in the centre of the hand's wrist. A skilful, experienced blow would send it through to the wood. Four to five more strokes would hammer the spike deep into the rough plank, and a final blow turned it up so that the hand could not slip free. A small projection, resembling a rhinoceros horn and known as the "sedile" is fitted solidly through the crotch.



This was fitted in order to take most of the weight off the condemned man's hands. Then a nail was driven through each foot. It was a death reserved for slaves, thieves and traitors. The wounds in the hands send fire down through the arms. Fainting only relieves temporarily.

It is darkness and pain; then pain and darkness. The pain in the back, arms, hands, feet and crotch is a dull, throbbing, horrible, endless pain.

The pain builds up. It multiplies. It is cumulative.

There is not one moment of respite. The cross is planted so that the greatest amount of sunlight will pierce the prisoner's eyes. Below, the curious crowd wait, fascinated by the torture. The macabre scene is played out slowly. Dying should be a private thing, not a public spectacle.

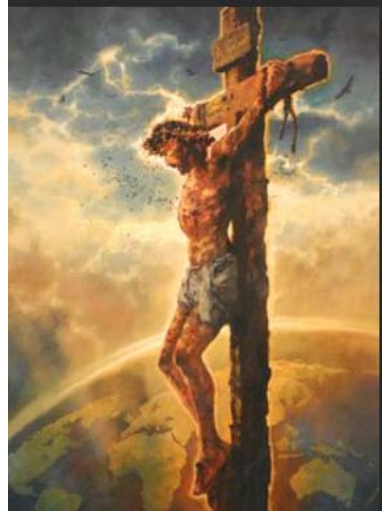
There is something obscene about having a mob of people standing around, waiting for you to die. Then the thirst begins. The lips are dry. The mouth is parched. The blood is hot. The skin is fevered. The greatest of all needs at this moment is a drop of cool water. Water is denied .

At the foot of the cross the death-squad drinks in the presence of the dying man, to add to his mental torment. The sun shines directly into the eyes of the crucified. Even when the eyelids are closed a red glare penetrates. The tongue thickens. What was once saliva is now like unloomed wool. Swelling begins in the hands and the feet. The sedile digs deeply into the genitals. It is impossible to turn, or to change one's position. Muscles begin to twitch. The real horror is only beginning.

What has happened up until now is child's play. One by one the muscles of the back gather in tight, knotty cramps. There is no escaping them, no pulling out of them, no gentle massaging hands to ease them away. They move across the shoulders and the thorax. They move down into the abdomen. After two hours on a cross, every muscle in the body is locked in solid knots and the agony is beyond endurance.

*Men shriek themselves into insanity.
The pain and symptoms are identical to
tetanus (lockjaw-when a muscle
undergoes continued contraction.)*

*Man, with all his genius, has never
devised a more cruel or more agonising
death than that of tetanus - the slow,
steady contraction of every muscle.
Death by crucifixion makes the agony
last as long as possible. Each hour is an
eternity. At times the cramps make the
neck rigid and the head is held flush
against the vertical beam. A man longs
for death. It is his only desire. There are
flies, insects, and the yelps of dogs with
the smell of blood in their nostrils.
Birds of prey, scavengers of the skies,
circle lower and lower.*



*Prayers seem to mock a man, but you either pray or curse.
As the hours pass, the tiny blood vessels which feed the nerves will be
squeezed flat, and with the lack of blood circulation comes paralysis.*

A new agony develops for those who linger on the cross.

*It is the agony of the mucous membrane. On the cross there is no
end of suffering. It is only the manner of suffering that changes, and
the degree of pain that changes. As the hours passed, soldiers were
inclined to hasten death. They began breaking bones. Standing on a
ladder, a practised legionnaire would swing a mallet in a short arc
and shatter the right femur (the thigh-bone) instantly.*

A second, sharp blow would shatter the left thigh.

These were new pains.

*During crucifixion, the mucous membrane - that thin, slippery
tissue which lines and lubricates much of the human body - dries
to the consistency of fine gravel and scrapes the tender tissues of
the anus (the posterior opening of the alimentary canal).*

*The dried membranes tear at the tortured throat.
They lie like stones in the sinuses. Layers of tissue are ripped
from the eyes every time they are moved or blinked.*

Could there ever be more intense suffering this side of hell?

Most condemned men died naked.

CHRIST WAS CRUCIFIED.

He died the most brutal death ever devised by man."

by C. M. Ward (Sydney)
Source Unknown

To the natural eye, the cross was a place of defeat and humiliation inflicted by one's adversaries. However, this is not how the Word of God depicts what transpired behind the scenes. It was a place of triumph and victory. Consider what was wrought by means of the cross:



HE DISARMED PRINCIPALITIES AND POWERS...

Col.2:15

HE DELIVERED THE SAINTS FROM THE POWER OF DEATH...

Heb. 2:14-15

HE OBTAINED THE KEYS TO DEATH AND HADES...

Rev.1:18

HE PLACED THE SAINTS IN AUTHORITY WITH HIM FAR ABOVE ALL PRINCIPALITY AND POWER, MIGHT AND DOMINION...

Eph. 1:20-22, 2:4-6

PLAN OF BATTLE:
DESTROY THE WORKS OF THE DEVIL

1 Jn. 3:8

METHOD OF BATTLE:
THE POWER OF THE CROSS

1 Cor. 1:18

COST OF BATTLE:
THE DEATH OF THE CROSS

Phil. 2:8 Heb. 12:2

The above diagram was from a previous teaching I had done on “the King of Glory-Mighty in Battle”. If you will take the time to read through all of the above scripture references, it will change your thinking about the concept of the cross. It was not a place of defeat, but of victory. The cross has to be counted among the weapons of our warfare, mighty in God to the pulling down of strongholds (2 Cor. 10:4) when you consider all that the scriptures reveal that was accomplished behind the scenes. This is why Paul would say the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved, it is the power of God (1 Cor. 1:18).

The cross of Christ is the power of God to those who are being saved (1 Cor. 1:18). This is what Paul proclaims about the cross. We must come to grips with the fullness of what is being implied in this statement. It is more than the fact that we obtain forgiveness of sins through the blood of His cross (Col. 1:20, Eph. 1:7). Look at the statement Paul makes pertaining to the power of the cross at work among those who are being saved:

“...GOD FORBID THAT I SHOULD GLORY EXCEPT IN THE CROSS OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, BY WHOM THE WORLD HAS BEEN CRUCIFIED TO ME, AND I TO THE WORLD.”

Gal. 6:14

**"...GOD FORBID
THAT I SHOULD GLORY EXCEPT IN THE CROSS
OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, BY WHOM THE WORLD
HAS BEEN CRUCIFIED TO ME, AND I TO THE WORLD."**

Gal. 6:14

THE **WORLD**



THE **FLESH**

**"KNOWING THIS,
THAT OUR OLD MAN
WAS CRUCIFIED WITH HIM,
THAT THE BODY OF SIN
MIGHT BE DONE AWAY WITH,
THAT WE SHOULD
NO LONGER BE SLAVES
OF SIN."**

Rom. 6:6

THE **DEVIL**

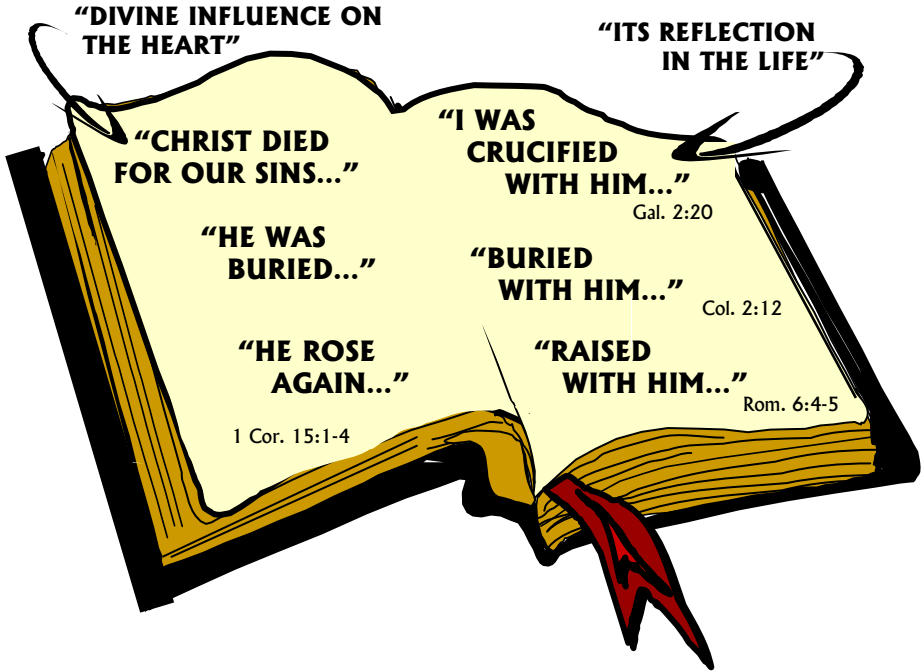
**"...HAVING NAILED IT
TO THE CROSS. HAVING
DISARMED PRINCIPALITIES
AND POWERS, HE MADE A
PUBLIC SPECTACLE OF THEM,
TRIUMPHING
OVER THEM
IN IT."**

Col. 2:14-15

We are keenly aware that throughout the Word of God, we are given this three-fold mandate to overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil. Paul reveals to us that the source of the ability to do so lies in the application of faith in the finished work of the cross of Christ. Jesus has done the work. We must respond in faith toward what He has accomplished on our behalf. It is our personal identification with the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ that supplies us with power to overcome. The central message of this power is the cross.

For the point of illustration, consider the teachings of Paul. In 1st Corinthians 15 Paul presents the gospel as consisting of Christ died for our sins... He was buried... He rose again... (1 Cor. 15:1-4). Central to this message is the cross. Paul goes on in other places in which we find him making a personal identification with these same three truths. Not only did Christ die for our sins, but we were crucified with Him. Not only is it true that He was buried, but we were buried with Him. Not only did He rise again, but we were raised with Him. We are to have a personal identification with the cross of Christ beyond the purchasing of our redemption. It is the very means by which we can overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil.

Through the personal application of what Christ did for Paul (and for us), we can see how this Divine influence on the heart led to a reflection in the life of Paul.



**"I HAVE BEEN CRUCIFIED WITH CHRIST;
IT IS NO LONGER I WHO LIVE, BUT CHRIST LIVES IN ME:
AND THE LIFE WHICH I NOW LIVE IN THE FLESH
I LIVE BY FAITH IN THE SON OF GOD,
WHO LOVED ME, AND GAVE HIMSELF FOR ME.
I DO NOT SET ASIDE THE GRACE OF GOD..."**
Gal. 2:20-21

In its context, this reference of Paul as not to have set aside the grace of God, certainly applies to more than having received forgiveness of sin. Paul is also speaking of "the life which I now live" as being an expression of faith in the Son of God who loved him and gave Himself for him. Paul speaks of a grace that produces a changed life! It is grace that has brought forth divine influence on the heart, but also a reflection in the life.



AM I BECOMING DOUBLE-CROSSED



EMBRACING
**THE
CROSS
OF
CHRIST**

**"...LOOKING UNTO JESUS,
THE AUTHOR AND
FINISHER OF OUR FAITH,
WHO FOR THE JOY THAT
WAS SET BEFORE HIM
ENDURED
THE CROSS..."**

Heb. 12:2



EMBRACING
**THE
CROSS
OF A
CHRISTIAN**

**"IF ANYONE DESIRES
TO COME AFTER ME,
LET HIM DENY HIMSELF,
AND TAKE UP
HIS CROSS DAILY,
AND
FOLLOW ME."**

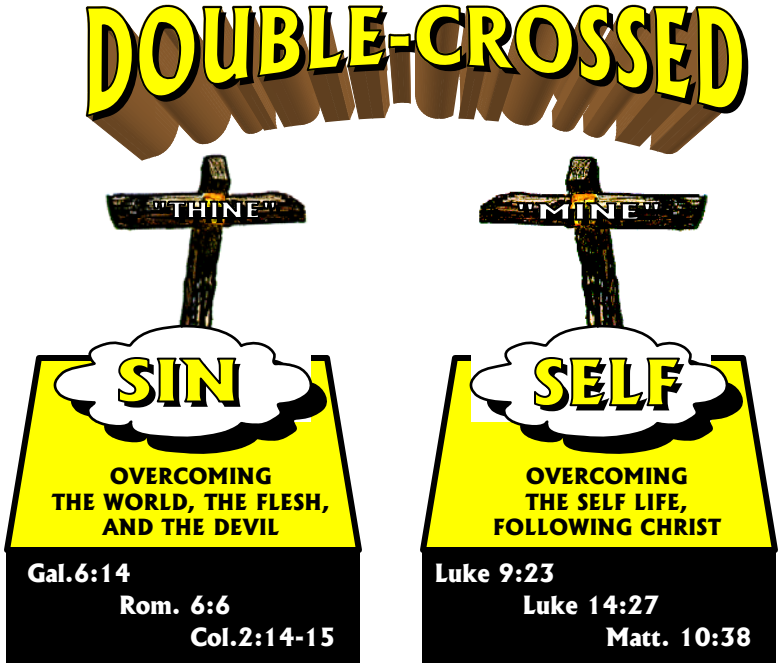
Luke 9:23

Another
cross
in my life?
If it is not meant
for
crucifying
the world, or
the flesh, or the devil,
what is
its purpose?



Having briefly pondered the cross of Christ, let us now consider the other half of being double-crossed, which is, the cross of a Christian. If indeed we overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil by means of faith in the finished work of the cross of Christ, what then can be the purpose for yet another cross in our life?

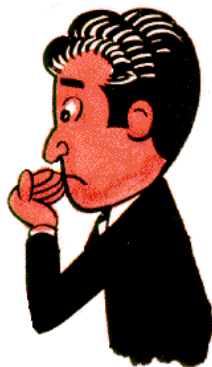
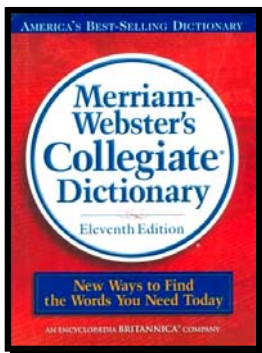
There are indeed two crosses in the life of a Christian. We are to be “double-crossed” living in a world under the domination of sin and self. Pictured below is a simplistic depiction of what it means to have a double-cross mentality. The cross of Christ is to be used to deal with the issue of sin. However, the cross of a Christian centers upon the crucifixion of the self-life.



We are constantly faced with choices in life. Not all of these choices stem from our three-fold enemy, the world, the flesh and the devil. Many are choices just to please self. Jesus has clearly stated that unless we deny self, we will not be able to become His disciples. To overcome self, we must maintain the concept of a daily cross life. This speaks of choosing a path of pain, suffering, and denial over self-indulgence, selfishness, and self-centeredness.

Perhaps you can testify that sin does not have dominion over you (Rom. 6:14), or that you do not let sin reign in your mortal body (Rom. 6:12). However, can you equally say that self does not reign over you either? It is quite easy to determine which cross you must apply in your life in any given situation. Just look to see whether one side of your choice is to practice what the Bible identifies as sin. It can stem from the world, the flesh or the devil. If you are dealing with sin, we must warfare with the finished work of the cross of Christ. However, when these choices are not sin, we must be aware of the danger of pleasing self. The mandate is that we are to become disciples. We can live above sin and still make self-pleasing choices which do not lead to becoming disciples.

**SELF-SERVING
 SELF-SUFFICIENT
 SELF-INDULGENT
 SELF-IMPORTANCE
 SELF-INTERESTS
 SELF-CENTERED
 SELF-PLEASING
 SELF-DEVOTION
 SELF-PITY
 SELF-CONFIDENT
 SELF-PROMOTING
 SELF-SEEKING
 SELF-RELIANCE
 SELF-CONSCIOUS
 SELF-RIGHTEOUS
 SELF-OPINIONATED
 SELF-WILLED
 SELF-GRATIFYING
 SELF-DIRECTED**



Lest we think that “self” as an enemy is no big thing, consider that Merriam-Webster’s dictionary lists four solid pages filled with various descriptions of “self” to ponder, some of which I have listed here to give you an idea of what a controlling force the self-life can be.

However, know this:

**“...THE
 FRUIT
 OF
 THE SPIRIT
 IS...**



SELF-CONTROL

Gal. 5:22



The good news is that among the nine fruits of the Spirit listed in Galatians Chapter 5 is the fruit of self-control. That implies that the power to overcome the self-life is not left up to your own self.



**“...NOT BY MIGHT
 NOR BY POWER,
 BUT BY MY SPIRIT SAYS THE LORD...
 WITH SHOUTS OF
 GRACE, GRACE TO IT!”**

Zech. 4:6-7

**“THEREFORE
SINCE CHRIST
SUFFERED FOR US
IN THE FLESH,
ARM YOURSELVES ALSO
WITH THE SAME MIND,
FOR HE WHO HAS
SUFFERED IN THE FLESH
HAS CEASED FROM SIN...”**

1 Pet. 4:1

**“YOU HAVE
NOT YET
RESISTED TO
BLOODSHED
STRIVING AGAINST
SIN.”**

Heb. 12:4

Jesus has vividly portrayed to His disciples the cost of discipleship. He likened the normal Christian life to be that of experiencing a daily crucifixion.



**“FOR TO THIS
YOU WERE CALLED,
BECAUSE CHRIST ALSO SUFFERED
FOR US, LEAVING US AN EXAMPLE,
THAT YOU SHOULD
FOLLOW IN HIS STEPS;
WHO COMMITTED NO SIN...”**

1 Pet. 2:21-22

Everyone knew what crucifixion was in Jesus' day. It was the means by which the Roman Empire kept the populous subdued by dreaded fear portrayed by the act of crucifixion. It was indeed a dreaded terror to behold, let alone to personally experience. There could be no worse fate than that of the cross. In using this metaphor, Jesus is stating what mind-set it will take to overcome sin and self. It requires the embracing of the pain of change to become dead to sin, but alive unto God (Rom. 6:11). It requires a crucifixion of our own will in order that we may do the will of the Father. This was the battle cry of Jesus. Consider these passages in which He makes a proclamation concerning the will of God:



**“...BEHOLD, I HAVE COME...
TO DO YOUR WILL, O GOD.”**

Heb . 10:7

**“...NOT WHAT I WILL,
BUT WHAT YOU WILL.”**

Mark 14:36

**“...YOUR WILL BE DONE
ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN.”**

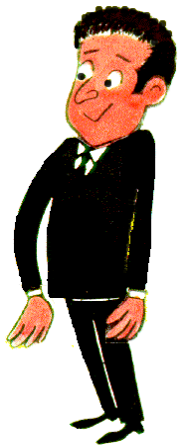
Matt. 6:10



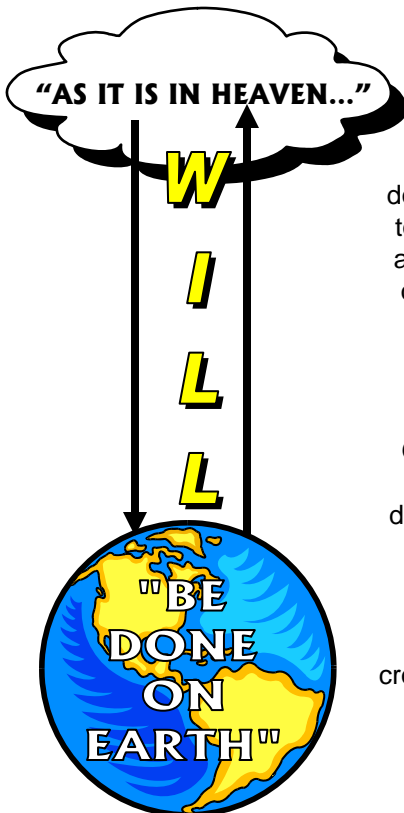
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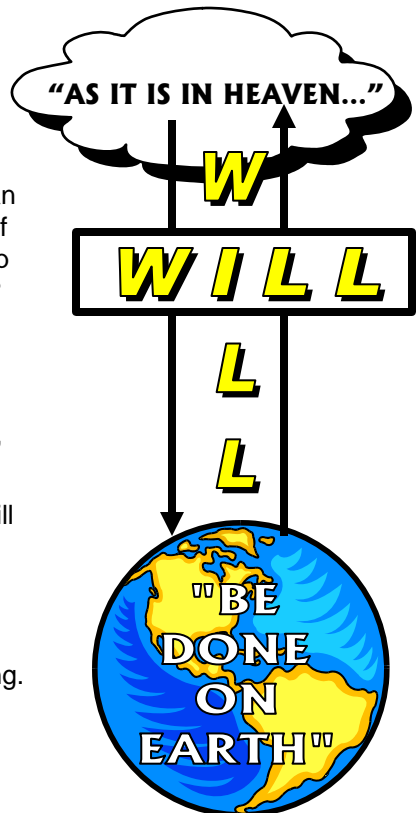
**"...YOUR WILL BE DONE
ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN."**
Matt. 6:10



In order to follow Jesus we must first train our lips to say what He said. If our confession isn't the same, neither will our walk be like His. Jesus had His mind firmly set on doing the will of the Father. It was His motivation for life and His motivation in death. While on earth, Jesus taught His disciples to pray, "...Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven" (Matt. 6:10). It must become our confession as well.



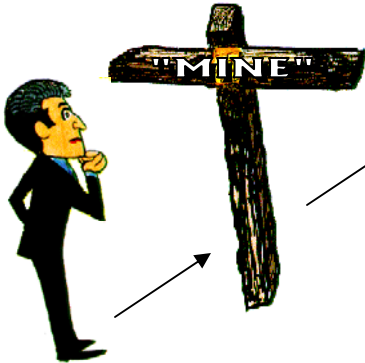
What does it mean to deny self and take up our cross? It is this: when "our will crosses God's will" we must deny our will in order to complete His will. This is cross-bearing.



THE COST OF NON-DISCIPLESHIP:

**...IS NOT
WORTHY OF ME."**
Matt. 10:38

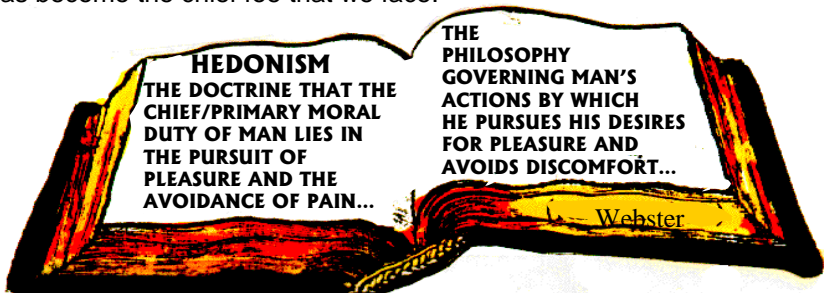
**"HE WHO DOES NOT
TAKE UP HIS CROSS
AND FOLLOW
AFTER ME..."**



Not only must we count the cost of discipleship, but also the cost of non-discipleship. What does Jesus mean by His statement, "He who does not take up his cross and follow after me is not worthy of Me"?

It is not the aspect of eternal life, for no one is worthy. Jesus is speaking of what Paul would later identify as "a great mystery" (Eph. 5:32). It is the Bride of Christ. I believe non-discipleship will cost you the Bride of Christ in eternity. We will not be found worthy to be married to Christ because we have refused to deny self, take up our cross daily, and follow Him. Paul warns us about such things as philosophy being able to cheat us of things in Christ (Col. 2:8).

The greatest philosophy in America is "hedonism". It is an anti-cross philosophy that is directly opposed to the mandate of denying self, taking up our cross daily, and following after Christ. Hedonistic philosophy is deeply rooted among God's people in America. The Constitution was written to support it's underlying tentents of life, Liberty and the pursuit of happiness. I believe it is also due to the erroneous preaching of one-cross theology in which God's people are willing to let Jesus do all the dying and suffering. This is but a half-truth. In hedonistic America this philosophy has become the chief foe that we face:

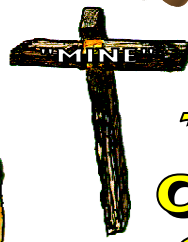


BECOMING DOUBLE-CROSSED



**THE
CROSS
OF
CHRIST**

**MAKES YOU A
CHRISTIAN**



**THE
CROSS
OF A
CHRISTIAN**

**MAKES YOU
CHRIST-LIKE**

God not only calls all men to become Christians by means of reconciliation through the blood of His cross (Col. 1:20), He also has predestined Christians to become Christ-like:

**"FOR WHOM
HE FOREKNEW,
HE ALSO PREDESTINED
TO BE CONFORMED
TO THE IMAGE OF
HIS SON,
THAT HE MIGHT BE
THE FIRSTBORN
AMONG MANY
BRETHREN."**

Rom. 8:29



**"BUT WE ALL...
BEHOLDING
AS IN A MIRROR
THE GLORY
OF THE LORD,
ARE BEING TRANSFORMED
INTO THE SAME IMAGE
FROM GLORY TO GLORY...
BY THE SPIRIT
OF THE LORD."**

2 Cor. 3:18

We can embrace half-the-truth and become Christians through the cross of Christ. Thereby we partake of the benefits of the suffering of Christ on our behalf. However great that is, God is calling us to embrace the whole truth pertaining to suffering:

**"FOR TO YOU IT HAS BEEN GRANTED ON BEHALF OF CHRIST,
NOT ONLY TO BELIEVE IN HIM, BUT ALSO TO SUFFER FOR HIS SAKE."**

Phil. 1:29

As Christians, we are called to go on to perfection (Heb. 6:1). Jesus, the author of our salvation, was Himself made perfect through sufferings (Heb. 2:10). We are reminded that we are not greater than our Master, but that it is enough to be like the master (Jn. 13:16). Therefore we must also take up our cross in order to follow after Christ's sufferings. It is the pathway to perfection.

BECOMING DOUBLE-CROSSED



THE
INITIAL

CONVERSION

EXPERIENCE

GIFT
REDEEM
ACCEPTED
CROSS
E

(our JUSTIFICATION)

THE
ONGOING

DISCIPLESHIP

EXPERIENCE

GROW
REIGN
ADVERSITY
CROSS
E

(our SANCTIFICATION)

Are you on the path to being double-crossed? The cross of Christ is center stage leading to conversion-the new birth. It provides saving grace through Jesus Christ. Likewise, the cross of a Christian is center stage leading to discipleship-the new life. It is an act of enabling grace through the might and power of the Holy Spirit.

The two crosses depicted above are central theology to the saving grace that provides our justification before God, and to the enabling grace that provides our sanctification by the Spirit of God. We must embrace both.

The remaining pages in this chapter will reveal to you the importance of pursuing both paths. The final "E" words in our acronym spelling will reveal the cost of embracing only half-the-truth about grace, but also the blessedness of embracing the whole truth. Let us add these final two words to our spelling of grace.

**"THIS IS THE TRUE GRACE OF GOD
IN WHICH YOU STAND." 1 Pet. 5:12**

**"FOR THE GRACE OF GOD THAT BRINGS SALVATION
HAS APPEARED TO ALL MEN, TEACHING US THAT,
DENYING UNGODLINESS AND WORLDLY LUSTS,
WE SHOULD LIVE SOBERLY, RIGHTEOUSLY,
AND GODLY IN THE PRESENT AGE,
LOOKING FOR THE BLESSED HOPE AND GLORIOUS APPEARING
OF OUR GREAT GOD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST,
WHO GAVE HIMSELF FOR US, THAT HE MIGHT REDEEM US FROM EVERY
LAWLESS DEED AND PURIFY FOR HIMSELF HIS OWN SPECIAL PEOPLE,
ZEALOUS FOR GOOD WORKS."**

Titus 2:11-14

**THE INITIAL
CONVERSION
EXPERIENCE**

**GIFT
REDEEM
ACCEPTED
CROSS
ETERNAL
LIFE**

**THE ONGOING
DISCIPLESHIP
EXPERIENCE**

**GROW
REIGN
ADVERSITY
CROSS
ETERNAL
REWARDS**



"SAVING GRACE"

"ENABLING GRACE"

These two "E" words constitute a major portion of Paul's theology. They are the words "eternal life" and "eternal rewards". They are the capstones to these two types of the grace of God. There is a flowing message contained in the chart above. Saving grace speaks of our conversion experience through Jesus Christ. It is a gift which leads to redemption. It causes us to be accepted by God. It comes only by embracing the cross of Christ. Its end result is that of eternal life. This is widely accepted as the grace message. However, it is only half-the-truth.

Enabling grace speaks of the call to discipleship through the Holy Spirit. It causes us to grow in grace. It also causes us to reign in life over the power of sin. It works through God-appointed adversity from Satan our adversary. It comes only as we respond to the call to take up the cross of a Christian and follow Christ. Its end result is eternal rewards. This is not widely accepted as part of the grace message.

In countless pulpits across this nation, this is what is presented as the grace message.

“THIS IS THE TRUE GRACE OF GOD IN WHICH YOU STAND!”



The content of this word is not error, but it becomes error when it is presented as the whole counsel of God concerning grace. In reality, as we have seen, it is only half-the-truth.

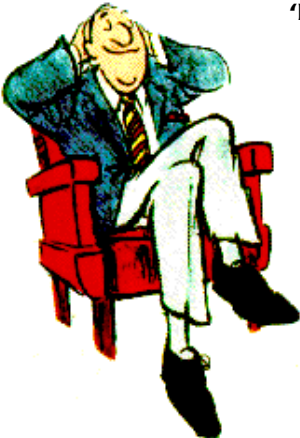
All that is stated here are words of comfort. Absent are all the other truths about grace which contain words that confront. Any good concordance will reveal the whole truth about grace. Why is there such a consistent, widespread presentation of only half-the-truth? The answer lies in a preference both in the pulpit and in the pew towards a message consisting of only words that comfort.

**GIFT
REDEEM
ACCEPTED
CROSS
ETERNAL
LIFE**

An emphasis upon words that comfort will fill pews with people who are half-hearted toward the things of God. It encourages a brand of Christianity that allows the people of God to maintain divided interests between heaven and earth. It breeds and feeds the spirit of compromise and lukewarmness such as we find in the church of Laodicea:

**“...YOU SAY,
‘I AM RICH, HAVE BECOME WEALTHY,
AND HAVE NEED OF NOTHING’...”**

Rev. 3:17



However, Jesus doesn't agree with how this church sees itself. His advice is to "...buy...gold refined in the fire..." (Rev. 3:18). Unless they repent, they will be spewed out by JESUS (Rev. 3:16). Only if they overcome, will they sit with Jesus on His throne (Rev. 3:21).

Are we hearing what the Spirit says to the churches? I think not.

Laodicea represents a large segment of the church which believes "they got it all when they got saved". They remain at ease because of a false security of "once saved, always saved."

Both concepts are error.

Some time ago I wrote a booklet entitled "The Seven Letters To The Seven Churches". Below is an excerpt from the section which deals with the Laodicean gospel. I compared what is presently circulated as the gospel to what Paul the apostle presented as his gospel in Philippians Chapter Three. What Paul states in this chapter are his goals in life almost twenty-three years after his conversion experience with Christ. Why is there such a wide discrepancy between Paul's view and that of the church today?

PAUL'S GOSPEL:



**"...NOT THAT I HAVE
ALREADY ATTAINED, OR AM
ALREADY PERFECTED;
BUT I PRESS ON,
...FOR THE PRIZE
OF THE UPWARD
CALL OF GOD
IN CHRIST JESUS...."**

**BRETHREN,
JOIN IN FOLLOWING
MY EXAMPLE,
AND NOTE THOSE WHO
SO WALK, AS YOU HAVE US
FOR A PATTERN..."**
Phil. 3:12-17

1. "If I may attain to the resurrection from the dead."
2. "I have not already attained, nor am I already perfected."
3. "I press on..."
4. "I want to lay hold of what Jesus has laid hold of me for which I have not yet apprehended..."
5. "I forget what is behind..."
6. "I reach forward to those things which are ahead..."
7. "My goal is to obtain the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus."

HIGH MOTIVATION

LAODICEA'S GOSPEL:



**"I AM RICH,
I HAVE
BECOME
WEALTHY,
I HAVE NEED
OF NOTHING..."**
Rev. 3:17

**I GOT IT ALL
WHEN I GOT SAVED...
GUARANTEED
TO BE RAPTURED BY,
MARRIED TO,
AND REIGN WITH CHRIST
BY HIS GRACE!**

1. When it comes, I am guaranteed to be included..."
2. I have already attained perfection because of justification..."
3. "I wait for the rapture."
4. "I got it all when I got saved-- I will be raptured by... married to... and reign with Christ-- guaranteed by grace."
5. "I live in the past..."
6. "There is nothing I must do..."
7. "The upward call of God is a gift because of my position in Christ Jesus."

NO MOTIVATION

To believe that “we got it all when we got saved” will not hold up to the clear teaching of God’s Word. Let us now consider Paul’s teaching found in 1st Corinthians Chapter Three in which he speaks of laying a foundation and then building a building upon it.



**“FOR WE ARE GOD’S FELLOW WORKERS...
GOD’S FIELD...GOD’S BUILDING.
ACCORDING TO THE GRACE OF GOD
WHICH WAS GIVEN TO ME,
AS A WISE MASTER BUILDER I HAVE LAID THE
FOUNDATION, AND ANOTHER BUILDS ON IT.
BUT LET EACH ONE TAKE HEED HOW HE BUILDS
ON IT. FOR NO OTHER FOUNDATION CAN
ANYONE LAY THAN THAT WHICH IS LAID,
WHICH IS JESUS CHRIST.**

**NOW IF ANYONE BUILDS ON THIS FOUNDATION
WITH GOLD, SILVER, PRECIOUS STONES (OR) WOOD, HAY, STRAW,
EACH ONE’S WORK WILL BECOME MANIFEST; FOR THE DAY WILL
DECLARE IT...THE FIRE WILL TEST EACH ONE’S WORK, OF WHAT SORT
IT IS. IF ANYONE’S WORK WHICH HE HAS BUILT ON IT ENDURES,
HE SHALL RECEIVE A REWARD. IF ANYONE’S WORK IS BURNED,
HE WILL SUFFER LOSS OF REWARD; BUT HE HIMSELF WILL BE SAVED,
YET SO AS THROUGH FIRE.”**

1 Cor. 3:9-15

Two distinct identities Paul establishes above, “the foundation” and “the building.” I have overlaid these principles upon our two completed charts of saving grace and enabling grace. Now we shall be able to see clearly where the error lies in the common presentation of grace:

“SAVING GRACE”

“ENABLING GRACE”

**CONVERSION:
GIFT
REDEEM
ACCEPTED
CROSS
ETERNAL
LIFE**

**DISCIPLESHIP:
GROW
REIGN
ADVERSITY
CROSS
ETERNAL
REWARDS**



Laying the

Building the

FOUNDATION

BUILDING

“NEW BIRTH”

“NEW LIFE”

ETERNAL LIFE

LAYING

THE FOUNDATION



"...ACCORDING TO THE GRACE OF GOD... AS A WISE MASTER BUILDER, I HAVE LAID THE FOUNDATION... NO OTHER FOUNDATION CAN ANYONE LAY THAN THAT WHICH IS LAID, WHICH IS JESUS CHRIST... LET EACH ONE TAKE HEED HOW HE BUILDS ON IT..."
1 Cor.3

"THEREFORE LEAVING THE DISCUSSION OF THE ELEMENTARY PRINCIPLES OF CHRIST, LET US GO ON TO PERFECTION, NOT LAYING AGAIN THE FOUNDATION..."
Heb. 6:1

"FOR BY GRACE YOU HAVE BEEN SAVED THROUGH FAITH, AND THAT NOT OF YOURSELVES; IT IS THE GIFT OF GOD, NOT OF WORKS LEST ANYONE SHOULD BOAST..."
Eph. 2:8-9

"...NOT BY WORKS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS WHICH WE HAVE DONE, BUT ACCORDING TO HIS MERCY HE SAVED US... THAT HAVING BEEN JUSTIFIED BY HIS GRACE WE SHOULD BECOME HEIRS ACCORDING TO THE HOPE OF ETERNAL LIFE."
Titus 3:5-7

"... THE GRACE OF GOD THAT BRINGS SALVATION HAS APPEARED TO ALL MEN... ...JESUS CHRIST, WHO GAVE HIMSELF FOR US, THAT HE MIGHT REDEEM US FROM EVERY LAWLESS DEED,
Titus 2:11-14a

ETERNAL REWARDS

BUILDING

THE BUILDING



"...YOU ARE GOD'S BUILDING.. EACH ONE'S WORK WILL BECOME MANIFEST... IF ANYONE'S WORK WHICH HE HAS BUILT ON IT ENDURES, HE WILL RECEIVE A REWARD. IF ANYONE'S WORK IS BURNED, HE WILL SUFFER LOSS..."
1 Cor.3

"BEING CONFIDENT OF THIS VERY THING, THAT HE WHO HAS BEGUN A GOOD WORK IN YOU WILL COMPLETE IT UNTIL THE DAY OF JESUS CHRIST"
Phil. 1:6

"FOR WE ARE HIS WORKMANSHIP, CREATED IN CHRIST JESUS FOR GOOD WORKS, WHICH GOD PREPARED BEFOREHAND THAT WE SHOULD WALK IN THEM."
Eph. 2:10

"... THOSE WHO HAVE BELIEVED IN GOD SHOULD BE CAREFUL TO MAINTAIN GOOD WORKS... LET OUR PEOPLE ALSO LEARN TO MAINTAIN GOOD WORKS... THAT THEY MAY NOT BE UNFRUITFUL."
Titus 3:8,15

AND PURIFY FOR HIMSELF HIS OWN SPECIAL PEOPLE, ZEALOUS FOR GOOD WORKS."
Titus 2:14b

Considering the previous page, is it sufficient just to lay a foundation to inherit eternal rewards, or must we go on to the call to build on that foundation? Does the foundation lead to eternal rewards in addition to eternal life, or must we, through our works as fellow workers with God, also build on the foundation? If you only embrace half-the-truth, then you are going to inherit half of what God intends for you! You will inherit eternal life if you have laid the foundation. You will not inherit eternal rewards unless you also build on that foundation. The foundation is the result of our justification through the saving grace of Jesus Christ. The building to be erected upon that foundation is through acts of sanctification through the enabling grace of the Holy Spirit.

1 Corinthians 3:9-15 is not the only place in which Paul spoke of the saints being involved in a building program. Neither is Paul the only apostle who speaks of this mandate:



Paul

“...YOU ARE... FELLOW CITIZENS... MEMBERS OF THE HOUSEHOLD OF GOD, HAVING BEEN BUILT ON THE FOUNDATION... IN WHOM THE WHOLE BUILDING, BEING JOINED TOGETHER, GROWS INTO A HOLY TEMPLE IN THE LORD, IN WHOM YOU ALSO ARE BEING BUILT TOGETHER FOR A DWELLING PLACE OF GOD IN THE SPIRIT.”

Eph. 2:19-22

YOU ALSO, AS LIVING STONES, ARE BEING BUILT UP A SPIRITUAL HOUSE...”

1 Peter 2:5



Peter

The church has indeed been taught that it is the temple of God. Paul and Peter, however, are emphasizing to the church that it is more than the physical body that constitutes that body. It extends to a corporate expression of the saints all together “being built... being joined together... being built up a spiritual house”.

Paul tells the saints, “Take heed how you build on the foundation.” The present emphasis and ministry of the Holy Spirit to the church centers upon building a habitation of God in the Spirit. For this reason, the Spirit of grace was sent to enable God’s people to grow in grace, to grow into a corporate dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

From the very beginning, God's purpose for grace has always centered upon building a temple, not just laying a foundation by means of the new birth. Consider once again what we stated earlier in this book from the prophet Zechariah pertaining to grace:

“THIS IS THE WORD OF THE LORD TO ZERUBBABEL: ‘NOT BY MIGHT NOR BY POWER, BUT BY MY SPIRIT,’ SAYS THE LORD OF HOSTS. ‘WHO ARE YOU, O GREAT MOUNTAIN? BEFORE ZERUBBABEL YOU SHALL BECOME A PLAIN!’ AND HE SHALL BRING FORTH THE CAPSTONE WITH SHOUTS OF ‘GRACE, GRACE’ TO IT!...



THE HANDS OF ZERUBBABEL HAVE LAID THE FOUNDATION OF THIS TEMPLE; HIS HANDS SHALL ALSO FINISH IT... THE PLUMB LINE (IS) IN THE HAND OF ZERUBBABEL....”

Zech. 4:6-10 excerpts

What is stated above is a beautiful type and shadow of what was to come. Zerubbabel was the governor of Jerusalem. He was appointed by God to lay the foundation of the temple and his hands shall also finish it. Any mountain in his way was to become as a plain with shouts of grace, grace to it! What a pattern for us to follow! We too have been commissioned to not only lay the foundation, but our hands are to finish the building that is to built on it!

Paul states, “I have laid the foundation”. He reminds us “No other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. 3:11). By now we should know that the foundation is the saving grace of God brought to us by Jesus Christ, who is the grace of God. We also should know that Paul exhorts us to build on that foundation. The means by which we do that is through the enabling grace of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of grace. We have seen that He has been sent forth to build a dwelling place for God in the Spirit. Like the type and shadow of the mandate given to Zerubbabel, we who have been commissioned by God to be fellow workers with God, are to overcome all mountains in our path which hinder the building of the temple of God, with shouts of grace, grace to it!

“DIVINE INFLUENCE
UPON
THE HEART”

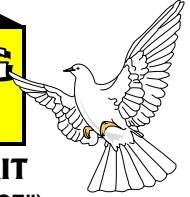
“WHO ARE YOU, O GREAT MOUNTAIN?...
YOU SHALL BECOME
A PLAIN...
WITH
SHOUTS
OF

“ITS
REFLECTION
IN
THE LIFE”

GRACE!

GRACE!

TO IT!”
Zech.4:6-7



JESUS THE CHRIST
("THE GRACE OF GOD")
Titus 2:11, Rom. 5:15

THE HOLY SPIRIT
("THE SPIRIT OF GRACE")
Heb. 10:29, Zech. 12:10

PARDON
OF SIN...

POWER
OVER SIN...

PROVIDES

PROVIDES

ETERNAL

ETERNAL

LIFE

REWARDS

(JUSTIFICATION)

(SANCTIFICATION)

Jesus Christ has come as the grace of God to bring us into a state of justification ("just as if I never had sinned"). When He ascended the Holy Spirit descended upon those who have been justified to lead them into paths of sanctification ("set apart-holy conduct").

Jesus came to lay the foundation of saving grace. The Holy Spirit came to build on that foundation with His enabling grace. We need both to finish the task God has appointed unto us. Remember, eternal life is the result of laying the foundation, but eternal rewards are given to those who build on the foundation. We can be content with eternal life through justification. However, Paul speaks of grace that provides an inheritance through becoming sanctified:



**“AND NOW, BRETHREN,
I COMMEND YOU TO GOD
AND TO THE WORD OF HIS GRACE,
WHICH IS ABLE TO BUILD YOU UP
AND GIVE YOU AN INHERITANCE
AMONG THOSE WHO ARE SANCTIFIED.”**

Acts 20:32



Paul

Are you aware that Paul and Peter set before us two different ways that a believer can enter into heaven?



Peter

ETERNAL LIFE

(JUSTIFICATION)

"...IF ANYONE'S WORK IS BURNED, HE WILL SUFFER LOSS; BUT HE HIMSELF WILL BE SAVED, YET SO AS THROUGH FIRE."

1 Cor 3:15

ETERNAL REWARDS

(SANCTIFICATION)

"ADD TO YOUR FAITH... IF THEY ARE YOURS AND AROUND... AN ENTRANCE WILL BE SUPPLIED TO YOU ABUNDANTLY INTO THE EVERLASTING KINGDOM OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST."

2 Peter 1:5,11



It is imperative that you give sufficient time to ponder the complete contents of Paul's words in chapter three of First Corinthians as well as Peter's detailed account in Second Peter chapter one. One of these two stark contrasts depict how you, the believer, will enter heaven. Both chapters are about a believer's works. So important are these two chapters that I have printed them for you on the next two pages.

In Paul's account the believer's works are burned up, but he himself is saved like a man running out of a burning building. Yes, he is saved, but suffers loss of everything he had. This believer is unprepared.

Peter paints a different picture. He instructs the believer in this life to diligently add seven things to his faith. If these things are yours and around, states Peter, then there awaits an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom. This believer is prepared.



1 CORINTHIANS CHAPTER THREE:

“SAVED, BUT SUFFER LOSS”

**“...AND EACH ONE
WILL RECEIVE
HIS OWN REWARD
ACCORDING TO HIS OWN LABOR.**

**FOR WE ARE GOD'S FELLOW WORKERS;
YOU ARE GOD'S FIELD,
YOU ARE GOD'S BUILDING.**

**ACCORDING TO THE GRACE OF GOD
WHICH WAS GIVEN TO ME,
AS A WISE MASTER BUILDER
I HAVE LAID THE FOUNDATION,
AND ANOTHER BUILDS ON IT.**

**BUT LET EACH ONE
TAKE HEED
HOW HE BUILDS ON IT.
FOR NO OTHER FOUNDATION
CAN ANYONE LAY
THAN THAT WHICH IS LAID,
WHICH IS JESUS CHRIST.**

**NOW IF ANYONE BUILDS
ON THIS FOUNDATION
WITH
GOLD, SILVER, PRECIOUS STONES,
(OR WITH)
WOOD, HAY, STRAW,
EACH ONE'S WORK
WILL BECOME CLEAR;
FOR THE DAY WILL DECLARE IT,
BECAUSE
IT WILL BE REVEALED BY FIRE;
AND THE FIRE WILL TEST
EACH ONE'S WORK,
OF WHAT SORT IT IS.**

**IF ANYONE'S WORK
WHICH HE HAS BUILT ON IT ENDURES,
HE WILL RECEIVE A REWARD.**

**IF ANYONE'S WORK IS BURNED,
HE WILL SUFFER LOSS;
BUT HE HIMSELF WILL BE SAVED,
YET SO
AS THROUGH FIRE.”**

1 Cor. 3:8-15

2 PETER CHAPTER ONE:

“AN ABUNDANT ENTRANCE”



**“TO THOSE
WHO HAVE OBTAINED
LIKE PRECIOUS FAITH
WITH US
BY THE RIGHTEOUSNESS
OF OUR GOD
AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST:
...GIVING ALL DILIGENCE,
ADD TO YOUR FAITH
VIRTUE,
TO VIRTUE KNOWLEDGE,
TO KNOWLEDGE SELF-CONTROL,
TO SELF-CONTROL PERSEVERANCE,
TO PERSEVERANCE GODLINESS,
TO GODLINESS BROTHERLY KINDNESS,
AND TO BROTHERLY KINDNESS LOVE.**

**FOR IF
THESE THINGS
ARE YOURS AND ABOUND,
YOU WILL BE
NEITHER BARREN NOR UNFRUITFUL
IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.**

**FOR HE WHO LACKS THESE THINGS
IS SHORTSIGHTED,
EVEN TO BLINDNESS,
AND HAS FORGOTTEN
THAT HE WAS CLEANSED
FROM HIS OLD SINS.**

**THEREFORE, BRETHREN,
BE EVEN MORE DILIGENT
TO MAKE YOUR CALL AND ELECTION SURE,
FOR IF YOU DO THESE THINGS
YOU WILL NEVER STUMBLE;**

**FOR SO
AN ENTRANCE
WILL BE SUPPLIED TO YOU
ABUNDANTLY
INTO
THE EVERLASTING KINGDOM
OF OUR LORD
AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST.”**

2 Peter 1:1-11

Note that in Peter's account we are shown two different pictures of born-again believers, one with vision of things pertaining to Jesus and one who is blind to the things that belong to Jesus:



Believer # 1

"FOR IF THESE THINGS ARE YOURS AND ABOUND, YOU WILL BE NEITHER BARREN NOR UNFRUITFUL IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST."



Believer # 2

"FOR HE WHO LACKS THESE THINGS IS SHORTSIGHTED, EVEN TO BLINDNESS, AND HAS FORGOTTEN THAT HE WAS CLEANSED FROM HIS OLD SINS."

"THEREFORE, BRETHREN, BE EVEN MORE DILIGENT TO MAKE YOUR CALL AND ELECTION SURE, FOR IF YOU DO THESE THINGS YOU WILL NEVER STUMBLE; FOR SO AN ENTRANCE WILL BE SUPPLIED TO YOU ABUNDANTLY INTO THE EVERLASTING KINGDOM OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST."



Peter singles out the believer who has purpose and vision derived from an ongoing personal relationship with Jesus Christ that will receive an abundant entrance into the everlasting Kingdom of Jesus Christ. Note that it is not just because this believer is born-again that he receives such an eternal inheritance, but because as a Christian he has added things to his faith namely, virtue, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness and love. Therefore he is not barren or unfruitful in the knowledge of Jesus Christ as is his blind-counterpart who is not even aware any longer that he was once cleansed from his old sins. Get the picture dear reader, this is not a comparison between a believer and an unbeliever! Peter is contrasting a believer with vision against one who has remained in a state of spiritual blindness to the things of God set before him! Hear Paul's warning that it takes spiritual discernment to lay hold of the things of God:



"EYE HAS NOT SEEN, NOR EAR HEARD, NOR HAVE ENTERED INTO THE HEART OF MAN THE THINGS WHICH GOD HAS PREPARED FOR THOSE WHO LOVE HIM. BUT GOD HAS REVEALED THEM TO US THROUGH HIS SPIRIT. THESE THINGS WE ALSO SPEAK, NOT IN WORDS WHICH MAN'S WISDOM TEACHES BUT WHICH THE HOLY SPIRIT TEACHES, COMPARING SPIRITUAL THINGS WITH SPIRITUAL. BUT THE NATURAL MAN DOES NOT RECEIVE THE THINGS OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD, FOR THEY ARE FOOLISHNESS TO HIM; NOR CAN HE KNOW THEM, BECAUSE THEY ARE SPIRITUALLY DISCERNED..."

1 Cor. 2:9-14



THE ULTIMATE ETERNAL REWARD: THE BRIDE OF CHRIST

**"EYE HAS NOT SEEN,
NOR EAR HEARD,
NOR HAVE ENTERED INTO
THE HEART OF MAN
THE THINGS WHICH GOD HAS
PREPARED FOR THOSE
WHO LOVE HIM."**

1 Cor. 2:9



Paul

Let us begin to examine what is written in the word of truth pertaining to the Bride of Christ. Does the church have exclusive rights to being the Bride of Christ as the result of the new birth by grace? Are the Old Testament saints excluded from being the Bride of Christ? Shall every member of the church become the Bride of Christ, and reign with Christ, simply because they have received the gift of eternal life? Most members of the church have been taught in the affirmative, but God's Word does not agree. Bridehood is not a gift of grace, but rather a reward for good works.

Let us begin to examine the things that the Holy Spirit wants our eyes to see, and our ears to hear. Those things which He desires would enter into our hearts pertaining to what God has prepared for those who love Him. There is no doubt that the Word of God offers the Bride of Christ to those in the church. Consider the thoughts of Paul on this subject:

**"FOR I AM JEALOUS FOR YOU WITH GODLY JEALOUSLY.
FOR I HAVE BETROTHED YOU TO ONE HUSBAND,
THAT I MAY PRESENT YOU AS A CHASTE VIRGIN TO CHRIST.**

**BUT I FEAR, LEST SOMEHOW,
AS THE SERPENT DECEIVED EVE BY HIS CRAFTINESS,
SO YOUR MINDS MAY BE CORRUPTED
FROM THE SIMPLICITY THAT IS IN CHRIST.**

("WHOLE-HEARTED AND PURE DEVOTION TO CHRIST Amp.")

**FOR IF HE WHO COMES PREACHES ANOTHER JESUS
WHOM WE HAVE NOT PREACHED,
OR IF YOU RECEIVE A DIFFERENT SPIRIT...
OR A DIFFERENT GOSPEL**

(I FEAR) YOU MAY WELL PUT UP WITH IT."

2 Cor. 11:2-4



Paul

Paul is certainly speaking to believers. Note that he does not give them some false security pertaining to the future event of being presented to Christ-their husband-to-be. Rather, Paul expresses a fear of corruption by Satan through the preaching of another Jesus, a different spirit and a different gospel. If the Bride of Christ was already secured simply by the act of being born-again, then Paul would be in error in expressing a fear such as he does in these passages.

It is not without significance that in Paul's expression he thinks back to Eve, the bride of Adam, for in his first epistle to the Corinthians he reminded this very same church that Jesus is referred to as "the last Adam" (1 Cor. 15:45). Satan corrupted the first Adam's bride through his craftiness. Paul is concerned now for the betrothed/espoused Bride-to-be of the last Adam, Jesus Christ. In type and shadow, the first Adam's bride was formed out of a portion of the body of Adam while he slept. Can it be that the last Adam's Bride will also be formed out of the Body of Christ while it too sleeps a spiritual state of slumber? The point is that Eve was not created from the whole body of Adam but from a portion of it. This implies that the Bride of Christ will also be formed out of a portion of the last Adam's body, the Body of Christ, the church. Paul's expressed fear is that the saints could be corrupted by Satan through the preaching of Jesus in a crafty different manner. What could be more crafty than to teach God's people that they already possess the promised inheritance of reigning with Christ as the Bride of Christ solely by means of the new birth? Why should you seek to obtain what you already possess? The question needs to be answered as to whether the Word of God spells out any conditions attached to becoming married to, and reigning with Christ as His Bride. Consider Paul once again as he addresses this issue with members of the church at Rome:



**"...YOU RECEIVED THE SPIRIT OF ADOPTION
BY WHOM WE CRY OUT, 'ABBA, FATHER'.
THE SPIRIT HIMSELF BEARS WITNESS WITH OUR SPIRIT
THAT WE ARE CHILDREN OF GOD,
AND IF CHILDREN, THEN HEIRS-HEIRS OF GOD
AND JOINT HEIRS WITH CHRIST,
IF INDEED WE SUFFER WITH HIM,
THAT WE MAY ALSO BE GLORIFIED TOGETHER."**

Romans 8:15-17

Paul uses two of the biggest little words in the Bible to state the conditions to becoming a child of God, an heir of God, and becoming a joint heir with Christ that will be glorified with Christ in eternity. Those two big little words are "if". The first "if" tells us that we become the children of God, heirs of God, through our encounter with the spirit of adoption. In other words, we become born again through God's saving grace. We are now called heirs of God. In Titus 3:7 Paul clarifies what we receive as an heir through the act of justification by the new birth:

**"THAT HAVING BEEN JUSTIFIED BY HIS GRACE
WE SHOULD BECOME HEIRS ACCORDING TO
THE HOPE OF ETERNAL LIFE."**

Titus 3:7

To become an heir of God leads to eternal life. However, Paul has more to say in the verse from Romans 8 than just becoming heirs of God as children of God. He goes on to speak of also becoming joint heirs with Christ through what we find under the second "if". We become joint heirs with Christ only if we suffer with Him. It is through this appointed suffering with Christ that we can inherit the promise to be glorified together. It is not an automatic result of being born again!

**“FOR TO YOU IT HAS BEEN GRANTED ON BEHALF OF CHRIST,
NOT ONLY TO BELIEVE IN HIM, BUT ALSO TO SUFFER FOR HIS SAKE...”**

Phil 1:29

“IF WE SUFFER (ENDURE), WE SHALL ALSO REIGN WITH HIM...”

2 Tim. 2:12

**“FOR I CONSIDER THAT THE SUFFERINGS OF THIS PRESENT TIME
ARE NOT WORTHY TO BE COMPARED WITH THE GLORY
WHICH SHALL BE REVEALED IN US.”**

Rom. 8:18

**“FOR OUR LIGHT AFFLICTION... IS WORKING FOR US
A FAR MORE EXCEEDING AND ETERNAL WEIGHT OF GLORY...”**

2 Cor. 4:17

Is not Paul writing all these things to believers in the church? Can we not see that he speaks of the condition of suffering with Christ in order to reign with Christ? We are not merely to believe in Him, says Paul, but also to suffer with Him. Those who do so will reign as joint heirs with Christ, and those who do not, will not reign. This is the clear teaching of Paul. Let us look at another great passage in which Paul speaks of the church becoming the Bride of Christ:

**“...CHRIST ALSO LOVED THE CHURCH
AND GAVE HIMSELF FOR IT,
THAT HE MIGHT SANCTIFY AND CLEANSE
IT WITH THE WASHING OF WATER
BY THE WORD,
THAT HE MIGHT PRESENT IT TO HIMSELF
A GLORIOUS CHURCH,
NOT HAVING SPOT OR WRINKLE
OR ANY SUCH THING,
BUT THAT IT SHOULD BE
HOLY AND WITHOUT BLEMISH...”**

**THIS IS A
GREAT MYSTERY...
CONCERNING CHRIST
AND THE CHURCH.”**

Eph. 5:25-32 excerpts



THE BRIDE

We can see from Ephesians 5 that Paul saw more to the relationship between Christ and the church than the fact that Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it. This is only part of what Jesus has in mind for His church. He not only washed it in His own blood (see Rev. 1:5, Acts 20:28) by giving Himself for it, He also wants to present it to Himself in a more glorious state. This requires washing in the water of the Word to sanctify it. Washing in the blood of Christ has justified the saints (Rom. 5:9). Washing in the water of the Word will sanctify the saints (Eph. 5:26), and qualify them to be presented to Christ as a bride (Ephesians 5:2, 2 Cor. 11:2.)

If you compare spiritual things to spiritual as we are instructed to do in 1 Corinthians 2:13, then we can grasp that Paul in this great mystery is talking about the Bride of Christ. She will be formed through washing in the water of the Word unto sanctification. This will produce a Bride without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing. She will be holy and without blemish.



"I KNOW YOUR WORKS."

Jesus wrote seven letters to His seven churches (Rev. 1-3). Each letter opens with the statement, "I know your works." Jesus is intently observing the works of His people. In the midst of all the anti-work theology being fed to God's people as an affront to grace, stand these counter-statements of Jesus Himself. Jesus appears to His churches as the Righteous Judge:

"I AM THE ALPHA AND THE OMEGA, THE FIRST AND THE LAST," AND, "WHAT YOU SEE, WRITE IN A BOOK AND SEND IT TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES WHICH ARE IN ASIA: TO EPHESUS, TO SMYRNA, TO PERGAMOS, TO THYATIRA, TO SARDIS, TO PHILADELPHIA, AND TO LAODICEA."

THEN I TURNED TO SEE THE VOICE THAT SPOKE WITH ME. AND HAVING TURNED I SAW SEVEN GOLDEN LAMPSTANDS, AND IN THE MIDST OF THE SEVEN LAMPSTANDS ONE LIKE THE SON OF MAN, CLOTHED WITH A GARMENT DOWN TO THE FEET AND GIRDED ABOUT THE CHEST WITH A GOLDEN BAND. HIS HEAD AND HAIR WERE WHITE LIKE WOOL, AS WHITE AS SNOW, AND HIS EYES LIKE A FLAME OF FIRE; HIS FEET WERE LIKE FINE BRASS, AS IF REFINED IN A FURNACE, AND HIS VOICE AS THE SOUND OF MANY WATERS; HE HAD IN HIS RIGHT HAND SEVEN STARS, OUT OF HIS MOUTH WENT A SHARP TWO-EDGED SWORD, AND HIS COUNTEenance WAS LIKE THE SUN SHINING IN ITS STRENGTH. AND WHEN I SAW HIM, I FELL AT HIS FEET AS DEAD." Rev 1:11-17

Remember, the apostle Peter stated that judgment begins at the house of God (1 Pet.4:17). That is why Jesus is shown above as the Righteous Judge standing in the midst of His churches. That is why we also find Jesus opening each of these prophetic letters with the words, "I know your works." Let us not forget Paul's admonition to the believers in his day:



"THIS IS A FAITHFUL SAYING, AND THESE THINGS I WANT YOU TO AFFIRM CONSTANTLY, THAT THOSE WHO HAVE BELIEVED IN GOD SHOULD BE CAREFUL TO MAINTAIN GOOD WORKS. THESE THINGS ARE GOOD AND PROFITABLE TO MEN."

Titus 3:8

We also established that Paul presented a delicate balance that exists pertaining to the believers works:

"FOR BY GRACE YOU HAVE BEEN SAVED THROUGH FAITH, AND THAT NOT OF YOURSELVES; IT IS THE GIFT OF GOD, NOT OF WORKS, LEST ANYONE SHOULD BOAST."



Eph. 2:8-10

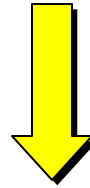
FOR WE ARE HIS WORKMANSHIP, CREATED IN CHRIST JESUS FOR GOOD WORKS, WHICH GOD PREPARED BEFOREHAND THAT WE SHOULD WALK IN THEM."



Also repeated in Revelation's opening chapters seven times is this sober admonition from Jesus to each of His blood-washed churches.

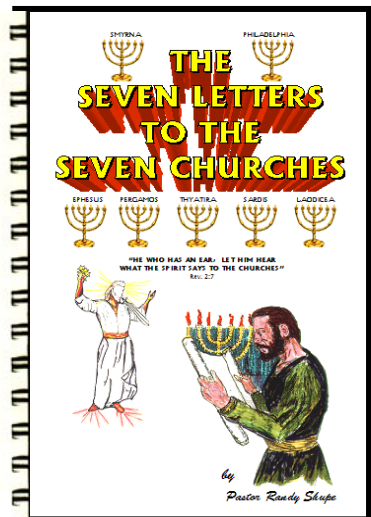
← Each letter opens with, "I know your works" and closes with a call to "hear what the Spirit says to the churches."

To enhance your ability to do so, I recommend that you read this book that is posted on my website: PastorRandyShupe.com.



The next 18 pages are reprints from this recommended book for your consideration. They deal in-depth with one of the letters written to the seven churches, the church of Philadelphia.

Prophetically, this is the church that receives from Jesus the three-fold promise to be raptured by Christ, to be married to Christ, and to reign with Christ for all eternity as the Bride of Christ. This is the ultimate reward that God has set before all believers. It is a prize to be won, not a gift to be received.





**AND TO THE ANGEL OF THE CHURCH
IN PHILADELPHIA WRITE,**

**'THESE THINGS SAYS HE WHO IS HOLY,
HE WHO IS TRUE, "HE WHO HAS THE KEY
OF DAVID, HE WHO OPENS AND NO ONE
SHUTS, AND SHUTS AND NO ONE OPENS":**

'I KNOW YOUR WORKS.

**SEE, I HAVE SET BEFORE YOU AN OPEN
DOOR, AND NO ONE CAN SHUT IT;
FOR YOU HAVE A LITTLE STRENGTH,
HAVE KEPT MY WORD,
AND HAVE NOT DENIED MY NAME.**

**INDEED I WILL MAKE THOSE
OF THE SYNAGOGUE OF SATAN,
WHO SAY THEY ARE JEWS
AND ARE NOT, BUT LIE --**

**INDEED I WILL MAKE THEM COME
AND WORSHIP BEFORE YOUR FEET,
AND TO KNOW THAT I HAVE LOVED YOU.**

**BECAUSE YOU HAVE
KEPT MY COMMAND TO PERSEVERE,**

**I ALSO WILL KEEP YOU
FROM THE HOUR OF TRIAL WHICH
SHALL COME UPON THE WHOLE WORLD,
TO TEST THOSE WHO
DWELL ON THE EARTH.**

BEHOLD, I AM COMING QUICKLY!

**HOLD FAST WHAT YOU HAVE,
THAT NO ONE MAY TAKE YOUR CROWN.**

**HE WHO OVERCOMES,
I WILL MAKE HIM A PILLAR
IN THE TEMPLE OF MY GOD,
AND HE SHALL GO OUT NO MORE.**

**I WILL WRITE ON HIM
THE NAME OF MY GOD
AND THE NAME OF THE CITY OF MY GOD,
THE NEW JERUSALEM,
WHICH COMES DOWN**

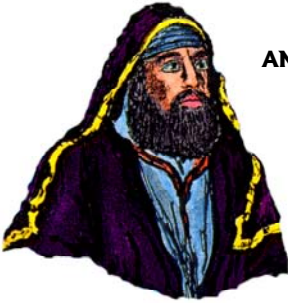
**OUT OF HEAVEN FROM MY GOD.
AND I WILL WRITE ON HIM MY NEW NAME.**

**'HE WHO HAS AN EAR, LET HIM HEAR
WHAT THE SPIRIT SAYS
TO THE CHURCHES.'"**

Rev. 3:7-13

THE LETTER TO PHILADELPHIA

Paul, the apostle, made a statement about the benefits of godliness which much of the church today needs to hear:



**“REJECT PROFANE AND OLD WIVES FABLES,
AND EXERCISE YOURSELF RATHER TO GODLINESS...
GODLINESS IS PROFITABLE FOR ALL THINGS,
HAVING PROMISE OF THE LIFE WHICH NOW IS
AND OF THAT WHICH IS TO COME.
THIS IS A FAITHFUL SAYING
AND WORTHY OF ALL ACCEPTANCE.
FOR TO THIS END WE BOTH LABOR
AND SUFFER REPROACH...”**

1 Timothy 4:7-9

Had the apostle Paul lived to read the letter Jesus gave to Philadelphia, he might have used it as an illustration of the truth that godliness is profitable in this life and in the next life also. Why do I say that? Just consider the two promises that are given to Philadelphia:

**A PROMISE
GIVEN
FOR
THIS LIFE:**

**RAPTURED
BY CHRIST**

**“THESE THINGS SAYS
HE WHO IS HOLY, HE WHO IS TRUE,
‘HE WHO HAS THE KEY OF DAVID,
HE WHO OPENS
AND NO ONE SHUTS,
AND SHUTS AND NO ONE OPENS:
‘I KNOW YOUR WORKS.
SEE, I HAVE SET BEFORE YOU
AN OPEN DOOR,
AND NO ONE CAN SHUT IT;
FOR YOU HAVE A LITTLE
STRENGTH, HAVE KEPT MY WORD,
AND HAVE NOT DENIED MY
NAME... BECAUSE YOU HAVE KEPT
MY COMMAND TO PERSEVERE,
I ALSO WILL KEEP YOU
FROM THE HOUR OF TRIAL WHICH
SHALL COME UPON
THE WHOLE WORLD,
TO TEST THOSE WHO DWELL
ON THE EARTH.”**



**A PROMISE
FOR
THE LIFE
TO COME:**

**MARRIED
TO CHRIST**

**“BEHOLD,
I AM COMING QUICKLY!
HOLD FAST
WHAT YOU HAVE,
THAT NO ONE MAY
TAKE YOUR CROWN.
HE WHO OVERCOMES,
I WILL MAKE HIM A PILLAR
IN THE TEMPLE OF MY GOD,
AND HE SHALL
GO OUT NO MORE.
I WILL WRITE ON HIM THE
NAME OF MY GOD AND THE
NAME OF THE CITY OF MY
GOD, THE NEW JERUSALEM,
WHICH COMES DOWN OUT
OF HEAVEN FROM MY GOD.
AND I WILL WRITE ON HIM
MY NEW NAME.”**

It is commonly taught that both the promise to be raptured by Christ, and to be married to Christ, are inherited simply by the single act of becoming born again. However, this letter to the church of Philadelphia refutes such teaching. Jesus is writing to born again believers and holds forth these two promises with specific qualifying factors attached, neither of which is due to the new birth:

**RAPTURED
BY CHRIST**

BECAUSE YOU HAVE:

1. KEPT (GUARDED) MY WORD...
2. NOT DENIED MY NAME...
3. KEPT MY COMMAND TO PERSEVERE...

**"I ALSO WILL KEEP YOU FROM
THE HOUR OF TRIAL WHICH SHALL COME
UPON THE WHOLE EARTH TO TEST THOSE
WHO DWELL ON THE EARTH."**

Rev. 3:10

What is stated above is theologically referred to as propositional revelation, which simply says, "You do this and I will do that." Jesus is saying "Because you have...I also will..." Notice this church is not given the promise because of their new birth relationship to Jesus, but rather because of their ongoing faithfulness to Him. Clearly, it is their works Jesus is measuring.

Consider as well the second promise and note the specific conditions attached to inheriting it:

**MARRIED
TO CHRIST**

TO HIM WHO OVERCOMES:

1. I WILL MAKE HIM A PILLAR
IN THE TEMPLE OF MY GOD...
2. I WILL WRITE ON HIM
THE NAME OF MY GOD...
3. I WILL WRITE ON HIM
THE NAME OF THE CITY
OF MY GOD, THE NEW JERUSALEM...
4. I WILL WRITE ON HIM
MY NEW NAME...



Proof that Jesus is speaking of the Bride of Christ is found by

comparing the above reference of New Jerusalem to Rev.21:2,9-11:

**"THEN I JOHN, SAW THE HOLY CITY, NEW JERUSALEM,
COMING DOWN OUT OF HEAVEN FROM GOD,
AS A BRIDE ADORNED FOR HER HUSBAND....
COME, I WILL SHOW YOU THE BRIDE, THE LAMB'S WIFE...
AND HE SHOWED ME THE GREAT CITY, NEW JERUSALEM,
DESCENDING OUT OF HEAVEN FROM GOD, HAVING THE GLORY OF GOD..."**

RAPTURED BY CHRIST

**“BEHOLD,
THE BRIDEGROOM
IS COMING;
GO OUT TO MEET HIM!
...THE BRIDEGROOM CAME,
AND
THOSE WHO WERE READY
WENT IN WITH HIM
TO THE WEDDING;
AND
THE DOOR WAS SHUT...”**

Matt. 25:1-13 excerpts

According to the scriptures, who is going to be raptured by Christ, the Bridegroom? Is it not “they that were ready?” Who is going to be married to Christ, is it not she who has “made herself ready?”

Lest you think the scriptures are speaking of the free gift of righteousness Christ gives to the believer at the new birth, consider the clarity of the Amplified Bible:

MARRIED TO CHRIST

**“AND I HEARD...THE VOICE OF A
GREAT MULTITUDE...
LET US BE GLAD AND REJOICE
AND GIVE HIM GLORY,
FOR THE MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB
HAS COME,
AND HIS WIFE
HAS MADE HERSELF READY.
AND TO HER IT WAS GRANTED TO
BE ARRAYED IN FINE LINEN,
CLEAN AND BRIGHT,
FOR THE FINE LINEN IS
THE RIGHTEOUS ACTS
OF THE SAINTS.”**

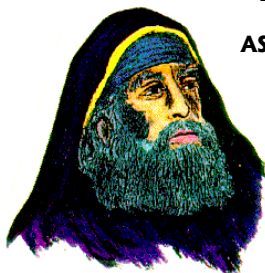
Rev 19:6-10

**“SHE HAS BEEN PERMITTED TO DRESS
IN FINE (RADIANT) LINEN, DAZZLING
AND WHITE--FOR THE FINE LINEN IS
(SIGNIFIES, REPRESENTS)
THE RIGHTEOUSNESS
(THE UPRIGHT, JUST, AND GODLY
LIVING, DEEDS, AND CONDUCT, AND
RIGHT STANDING WITH GOD) OF THE
SAINTS (GOD'S HOLY PEOPLE).”**

Rev 19:8 Amplified

Perhaps we should inject Paul's own testimony of his goals as a born again Christian since he clearly sets himself as a pattern to be followed:

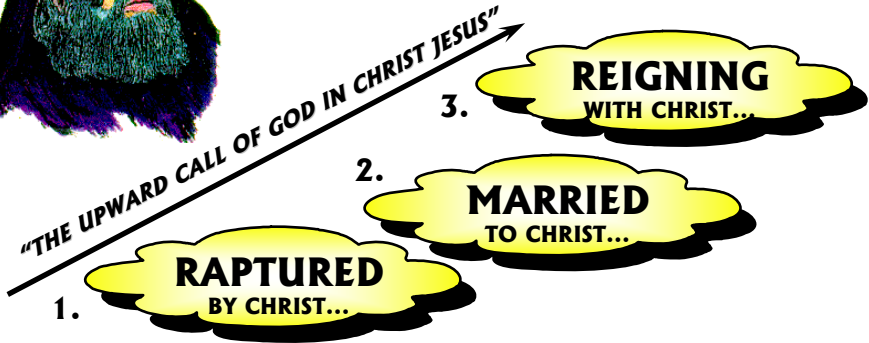
**“BRETHREN, JOIN IN FOLLOWING MY EXAMPLE,
AND NOTE THOSE WHO SO WALK,
AS YOU HAVE US FOR A PATTERN.”** Philippians 3:17



**“BUT I PRESS ON
THAT I MAY LAY HOLD OF THAT FOR WHICH
CHRIST JESUS HAS LAID HOLD OF ME.
BUT ONE THING I DO,
FORGETTING THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE BEHIND
AND REACHING FORWARD TO THOSE THINGS
WHICH ARE AHEAD,
I PRESS TOWARD THE PRIZE OF THE UPWARD CALL
OF GOD IN CHRIST JESUS.”** Philippians 3:12-14

Paul does not seem to be saying what we hear today, “I got it all when I got saved”. Even though he was born again, had eternal life, and even received the highest calling God gave to man, the apostleship, Paul was motivated above all these things to run a race for a prize not yet won!

Eternal life is truly a gift of God's grace,
 but eternal rewards are earned prizes.
 It is my firm conviction that the prize Paul sought to
 lay hold of, which he called the
 "upward call of God in Christ Jesus,"
 has three progressive stages:



I also believe that if you will meditate carefully in what Jesus promises to Philadelphia, you will find all three of these promised events are included:

RAPTURED BY CHRIST...

"BECAUSE YOU HAVE KEPT... I ALSO WILL KEEP YOU FROM THE HOUR OF TRIAL WHICH SHALL COME UPON THE WHOLE WORLD, TO TEST THOSE WHO DWELL ON THE EARTH."
 Rev. 3:10

"SEE, I HAVE SET BEFORE YOU AN OPEN DOOR AND NO ONE CAN SHUT IT."
 Rev. 3:8

MARRIED TO CHRIST...

"HE WHO OVERCOMES... I WILL WRITE ON HIM THE NAME OF MY GOD AND THE NAME OF THE CITY OF MY GOD, THE NEW JERUSALEM, WHICH COMES DOWN OUT OF HEAVEN FROM MY GOD"
 (See Rev.21:2-3,9)
"...AND I WILL WRITE ON HIM MY NEW NAME."
 Rev. 3:12

REIGNING WITH CHRIST...

"BEHOLD, I COME QUICKLY! HOLD FAST WHAT YOU HAVE, THAT NO ONE MAY TAKE YOUR CROWN!"
 Rev. 3:11

Note the qualifying conditions, dear reader! They are not automatically obtained by means of the new birth! These are specific conditions to be fulfilled by our lifestyle as born-again Christians!

**“I WILL BE A FATHER TO YOU,
AND YOU SHALL BE MY SONS AND DAUGHTERS,
SAYS THE LORD ALMIGHTY.”**

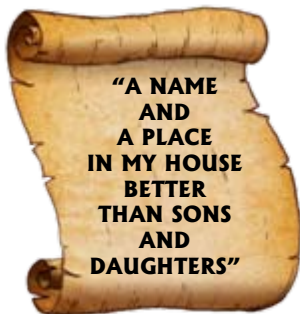
2 Cor. 6:18

We can all readily agree that becoming “sons and daughters” of the Almighty God is a gift of God’s grace by means of receiving the new birth. We become “children of God” through the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, “Abba (daddy) Father!” (Rom.8:15-16)

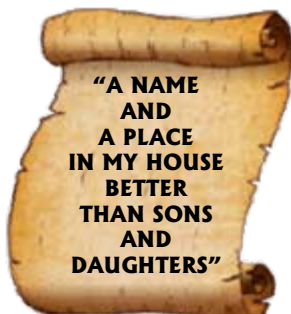
However, are you aware that becoming sons and daughters is not God’s highest place for His people? We are taught that it is, but it is not. The new birth is so exalted in today’s theology that it has birthed the popular saying, “I got it all when I got saved.” This is not sound doctrine, but rather doctrine that just sounds good. God promised something higher than the position of sons and daughters even to the Old Covenant saints:

**“FOR THUS SAYS THE LORD:
TO THE EUNUCHS WHO KEEP MY SABBATHS,
AND CHOOSE WHAT PLEASES ME, AND HOLD FAST MY COVENANT,
EVEN TO THEM I WILL GIVE IN MY HOUSE AND WITHIN MY WALLS
A PLACE AND A NAME BETTER THAN THAT OF SONS AND DAUGHTERS;
I WILL GIVE THEM AN EVERLASTING NAME THAT SHALL NOT BE CUT OFF.”**

Isa. 56:5



**PROMISED TO
THE FAITHFUL SAINTS
IN THE OLD COVENANT...**



**PROMISED TO
THE FAITHFUL SAINTS
IN THE NEW COVENANT**

PHILADELPHIA:

A NAME:

“The name of My God...
the name of the City of
My God, New Jerusalem...
My new name...”

A PLACE:

“He who overcomes,
I will make him a pillar
in the temple of My God,
and he shall go out
no more...”

The symbology found in Revelation has its origin in the Old Testament. What God promised the faithful followers in His Old Covenant He has carried over into the New Covenant. Now we have clarification as to “the name” and “the place” in God’s house that will be better than sons and daughters!

Jesus tells this church to hold fast what she has. Let us consider

WHAT SHE HAS:



Philadelphia:

“BROTHERLY LOVE”

**“LOVE
WITHOUT HYPOCRISY...”**

Rom. 12:9

**“SINCERE LOVE
OF THE BRETHREN
WITH A PURE HEART...”**

1 Pet. 1:22

**“ADD TO YOUR FAITH...
BROTHERLY KINDNESS
(THAT YOU MAY OBTAIN)
AN ABUNDANT ENTRANCE
INTO THE EVERLASTING
KINGDOM...”**

2 Pet. 1:7

What is in a name? This church is called “Philadelphia” which means brotherly love. The apostle John plainly states that the level of our love for God is measured by the level of our love for the brethren:



**“BELOVED, LET US LOVE ONE ANOTHER...
EVERYONE WHO LOVES IS BORN OF GOD
AND KNOWS GOD.**

**HE WHO DOES NOT LOVE
DOES NOT KNOW GOD,
FOR GOD IS LOVE.”**

1 John 4:7-8

**“HE WHO LOVES HIS BROTHER ABIDES IN THE LIGHT...
BUT HE WHO HATES HIS BROTHER IS IN DARKNESS...”**

1 John 2:9-11

The Bride of Christ will follow Peter's admonition to “add ... brotherly kindness to your faith” (see 2 Peter 1:7). Such brotherly love is among the seven things that we are to have worked in us that will provide for us the ability to obtain an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom. Contrast this abundant entrance to that of the carnal Christian who remains a babe in Christ as found in First Corinthians Chapter Three. This one's entrance into heaven is described as suffering loss of reward, but saved, yet so as through fire:

**“IF ANYONE'S WORK IS BURNED, HE WILL SUFFER LOSS,
BUT HE HIMSELF WILL BE SAVED, YET SO AS THROUGH FIRE.”** 1 Cor. 3:15

The fact that scripture contrasts two different entrances into Heaven for two kinds of believers, confirms the importance of seeing the value of “adding to your faith” such virtues as brotherly love.

What else does Jesus say this church has?

WHAT SHE HAS:

“HOLY AND TRUE”

**“AS HE WHO HAS CALLED YOU
IS HOLY,
YOU ALSO BE HOLY
IN ALL YOUR CONDUCT.”**

1 Pet. 1:15

**“BEHOLD,
YOU DESIRE TRUTH
IN THE INWARD PARTS”**

1 Pet. 1:15

**“HE CHOSE US IN HIM BEFORE
THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD,
THAT WE SHOULD BE HOLY
AND WITHOUT BLAME
BEFORE HIM IN LOVE...”**

Eph 1:4-5



Jesus appears to this church as one who is “holy and true” (Rev. 3:7) To Smyrna He appeared as “He who was dead and came to life.” This is a martyr speaking to those whom He calls to martyrdom. Jesus appears to each church with some aspect of His own character which they have or that they desperately need. Since Philadelphia receives no correction from Jesus, we can assume that He is identifying with their character and testimony of being holy and true.

David, a man after God’s own heart, realized that what God wanted most in His people was truth in the inward parts (Psalm 51:6). Peter tells us that God requires that His people be holy in all their conduct (1 Pet.1:14-16). Such personal holiness will be an identifying mark of the Bride of Christ. Her vision, goal and purpose will be to fulfill what Paul expressed pertaining to the espoused Bride of Christ:

**“THEREFORE, HAVING THESE PROMISES,
BELOVED, LET US CLEANSE OURSELVES
FROM ALL FILTHINESS OF THE FLESH AND SPIRIT,
PERFECTING HOLINESS IN THE FEAR OF THE LORD.”**

2 Cor. 7:1

**“...CHRIST ALSO LOVED THE CHURCH AND GAVE HIMSELF FOR HER,
THAT HE MIGHT SANCTIFY AND CLEANSE HER WITH THE WASHING OF
WATER BY THE WORD, THAT HE MIGHT PRESENT HER TO HIMSELF
A GLORIOUS CHURCH, NOT HAVING SPOT OR WRINKLE
OR ANY SUCH THING,
BUT IT SHOULD BE HOLY AND WITHOUT BLEMISH.”**

Eph. 5:25-28

WHAT SHE HAS:



“THE KEY OF DAVID”

**“I HAVE FOUND DAVID A MAN
AFTER MY OWN HEART,
WHO WILL DO ALL MY WILL.”**

Acts 13:22

**“HE WHO HAS
THE KEY OF DAVID,
HE WHO OPENS,
AND NO ONE SHUTS,
AND SHUTS AND NO ONE OPENS.
I KNOW YOUR WORKS.
SEE, I HAVE SET BEFORE YOU
AN OPEN DOOR
AND NO ONE CAN SHUT IT...”**

Rev. 3:7-8

Jesus mentions three distinct sets of keys which He has in His possession:

1. **THE KEYS TO THE KINGDOM** (Matt. 16:19)
2. **THE KEYS TO DEATH AND HADES** (Rev. 1:18)
3. **THE KEY OF DAVID** (Rev. 3:7)

As important as the other keys are, the key of David is stated to be that which opens and shuts the door in heaven. This is the “key” to the promised rapture, the great escape for God’s faithful and true believers from the great trial that is coming to test all those who dwell on the earth. This most conditional promise is specifically given to Philadelphia as a reward for her works-not as the result of having received an unmerited gift of God’s grace. Remember, when it comes to the rapture, Jesus taught the need to be found “worthy to escape” (Luke 21:36).

Here is what Jesus states as Philadelphia’s worthiness to escape:



**“I KNOW YOUR WORKS.
SEE, I HAVE SET BEFORE YOU AN OPEN DOOR...
...YOU HAVE KEPT MY WORD,
...HAVE NOT DENIED MY NAME...
...BECAUSE YOU HAVE KEPT MY COMMAND TO PERSEVERE,
I ALSO WILL KEEP YOU FROM THE HOUR OF TRIAL
WHICH SHALL COME UPON THE WHOLE WORLD,
TO TEST THOSE WHO DWELL ON THE EARTH.”**

Rev. 3:8-10

Since we are dealing with a book steeped in symbology, we must look to see what God records of David to gain insight into the spiritual meaning of this key:

**“DAVID...
TO WHOM HE GAVE
TESTIMONY AND SAID,
'I HAVE FOUND DAVID...
A MAN AFTER
MY OWN HEART,
WHO WILL DO
ALL MY WILL.’”**
Acts 13:22



David did not walk in sinless perfection, as we all know. However, when God reproved David, he was quick to repent and returned to obeying His God. The key to being found “without spot or wrinkle” as the Bride of Christ does not lie in a life of sinless perfection, but rather in maintaining a broken and contrite heart before God as did David. Meditating in Psalm 51 would be a good starting point to see the heart attitude of this servant of God.

It is beyond the scope of this study to consider all the aspects of the life of David, but below is a little synopsis of some of the areas that made David a man after God’s own heart that are worth considering:

DAVID

**HAVE FOUND DAVID, A MAN AFTER MY OWN HEART,
WHO WILL DO ALL MY WILL”**

HE SHALL BUILD A HOUSE FOR MY NAME”

PRAYER
Psalm. 5:1-3

PRAISE
Psalm. 9:1-2

PURPOSE
Psalm. 27:4-5

DECISION
Psalm. 101:1-4

FAITH
Psalm. 18:1-3

REMORSE
Psalm. 32:5, 38:18

TESTIMONY
Psalm. 40:8-10

HUMILITY
Psalm. 131:1-2

THANKSGIVING
Psalm. 101:1-4

**OLD
TESTAMENT:**

“...THE KEY OF
OF
THE HOUSE
OF DAVID
I WILL LAY ON
HIS SHOULDER;
SO HE WILL
OPEN AND NO
ONE SHUT;
AND HE SHALL
SHUT AND NO
ONE SHALL
OPEN...
HE WILL
BECOME
A GLORIOUS
THRONE
TO
HIS FATHER’S
HOUSE.”

Isa. 22:22-23



**NEW
TESTAMENT:**

“THESE THINGS
SAYS HE WHO
IS HOLY,
HE WHO
IS TRUE,
“HE WHO HAS
THE KEY OF
DAVID.
HE WHO OPENS
AND NO ONE
SHUTS,
AND SHUTS
AND NO ONE
OPENS...
SEE,
I HAVE SET
BEFORE YOU
AN OPEN DOOR
AND NO ONE
CAN SHUT IT”

Rev. 3:7

**“...I WILL ESTABLISH HIS KINGDOM.
HE SHALL BUILD A HOUSE FOR MY NAME,
AND I WILL ESTABLISH THE THRONE OF HIS KINGDOM FOREVER.”**

2 Sam. 7:12-13

The symbology found in Revelation comes from other illustrations in the Bible. Such is the case with the symbology of “an open door” controlled by the key of David. As David was to build “a glorious throne to His Father’s house” so likewise is the church called to build such a spiritual house to the Lord. Clearly stated is the fact:

**“BUT CHRIST A SON OVER HIS OWN HOUSE,
WHOSE HOUSE WE ARE...”**

Heb. 3:6

Paul the apostle states this mission of the church as well:

**“NOW THEREFORE YOU ARE NO LONGER STRANGERS AND
FOREIGNERS, BUT FELLOW CITIZENS WITH THE SAINTS AND MEMBERS
OF THE HOUSEHOLD OF GOD, HAVING BEEN BUILT ON THE
FOUNDATION OF THE APOSTLES AND PROPHETS, JESUS HIMSELF BEING
THE CHIEF CORNERSTONE,
IN WHOM THE WHOLE BUILDING, BEING JOINED TOGETHER,
GROWS INTO A HOLY TEMPLE IN THE LORD,
IN WHOM YOU ALSO ARE BEING BUILT TOGETHER
FOR A HABITATION OF GOD IN THE SPIRIT.”**

Eph. 2:19-22

Read the above carefully. It is yet another of one of Paul's long single sentences in which he expresses the fullness of God's plan for His people. Be busy in this building project and you too will find an open door in heaven that functions by the key of David—a man after God's own heart!

Let us consider the fourth thing Jesus mentions that this church has:

WHAT SHE HAS:

“KEPT MY WORD”

**“I HAVE NOT SHUNNED
TO DECLARE
THE WHOLE COUNSEL OF GOD.”**

Acts 20:27

**“WE ARE NOT
AS SO MANY PEDDLING
 (“ADULTERATING FOR GAIN”)
THE WORD OF GOD,
BUT AS OF SINCERITY,
BUT AS FROM GOD,
WE SPEAK
IN THE SIGHT OF GOD IN CHRIST.”**

2 Cor. 2:17

**“NOR (ARE WE) HANDLING
THE WORD OF GOD DECEITFULLY,
BUT BY
MANIFESTATION
OF THE TRUTH...
IN THE SIGHT OF GOD.”**

2 Cor. 4:2



It is plain to see that what Paul speaks in the scriptures above continues to plague the church today. The Word of God is being peddled, handled deceitfully, and purposely diluted through the current wave of money-motivated prosperity teaching of which Peter prophetically warned:

**“...THERE WILL BE FALSE TEACHERS AMONG YOU...
MANY WILL FOLLOW THEIR DESTRUCTIVE WAYS,
BECAUSE OF WHOM THE WAY OF TRUTH WILL BE
BLASPHEMED. BY COVETOUSNESS THEY WILL
EXPLOIT YOU WITH DECEPTIVE WORDS...”**

2 Peter 2:1-2



As Paul did not shun to declare the whole counsel of God, so likewise will the Bride of Christ keep (guard) the words of her Master in purity and in truth. Here is our mandate:

**“BE DILIGENT TO PRESENT YOURSELF APPROVED TO GOD,
A WORKER WHO DOES NOT NEED TO BE ASHAMED,
RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD OF TRUTH.”**

2 Tim.2:15

**“PREACH THE WORD! BE READY IN SEASON AND OUT OF SEASON.
CONVINCE, REBUKE, EXHORT, WITH ALL LONGSUFFERING AND TEACHING.
FOR THE TIME WILL COME WHEN THEY WILL NOT ENDURE SOUND
DOCTRINE, BUT ACCORDING TO THEIR OWN DESIRES, BECAUSE THEY HAVE
ITCHING EARS, THEY WILL HEAP UP FOR THEMSELVES TEACHERS; AND THEY
WILL TURN THEIR EARS AWAY FROM THE TRUTH, AND BE TURNED ASIDE
UNTO FABLES. BUT YOU BE WATCHFUL IN ALL THINGS...”**

2 Tim. 4:1-5

The fifth thing Jesus mentions that this church has:

WHAT SHE HAS:



“NOT DENIED HIS NAME”

**“THEY PROFESS TO KNOW GOD,
BUT DENY AND RENOUNCE HIM
BY WHAT THEY DO.”**

Titus 1:16 Amplified

**“IF ANYONE DOES NOT PROVIDE
FOR HIS OWN
(ESPECIALLY THOSE
OF HIS OWN HOUSEHOLD)
HE HAS
DENIED THE FAITH
AND IS WORSE
THAN AN UNBELIEVER.”**

1 Tim.5:8

The denial of God's name does not have to be done by the words of our mouth, it can be done by the deeds we either perform or fail to perform. Paul speaks of such to Titus:

**“THEY PROFESS TO KNOW GOD--
TO RECOGNIZE, PERCEIVE AND BE ACQUAINTED WITH HIM--
BUT DENY AND DISOWN AND RENOUNCE HIM
BY WHAT THEY DO;
THEY ARE DETESTABLE AND LOATHSOME... DISOBEDIENT...
DISLOYAL AND REBELLIOUS...
UNFIT AND WORTHLESS FOR GOOD WORK.”**

Titus 1:16 Amplified

Remember that the foolish virgins are calling Jesus “Lord, Lord!” (Matt. 25:11), but Jesus Himself has warned of such empty words before:



**“NOT EVERYONE WHO SAYS TO ME, ‘LORD, LORD,’
SHALL ENTER THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN,
BUT HE WHO DOES THE WILL OF MY FATHER IN HEAVEN.”**

Matt. 7:21

The Third commandment speaks of taking the Name of the Lord in vain. However, this is not speaking of profanity as commonly interpreted:

**TO TAKE THE NAME OF THE LORD IN VAIN
IS TO DENY IN REALITY THE ONLY TRUE GOD;
IT IS THE EMPTY PROFESSION OF HIM WHEN OUR LIVES AND ACTIONS,
AND OFTEN EVERY THOUGHT, POSSESSION,
AND EVERY LAW-SPHERE IS ALIENATED FROM GOD...”**
(The Institutes of Biblical Law- R.J. Rushdoony, pg.117)

His name is Christ and we bear His name as Christians. However, we can take His name to ourselves in vain by choosing not to be followers of Christ.

The sixth thing Jesus mentions that this church has:

WHAT SHE HAS:

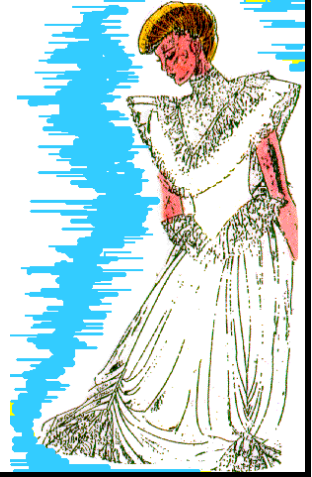
“A TRUE JEW”

**“THEY SAY THEY ARE JEWS
AND ARE NOT-BUT LIE...”**

Rev. 3:9

**“HE WHO IS A JEW
IS ONE INWARDLY...
(CIRCUMCISED)
IN THE HEART...
IN THE SPIRIT,
AND NOT IN THE LETTER;
WHOSE PRAISE IS NOT FROM MEN,
BUT FROM GOD.”**

Rom. 2:28-29



**“INDEED I WILL MAKE THOSE OF THE SYNAGOGUE OF SATAN,
WHO SAY THEY ARE JEWS AND ARE NOT, BUT LIE--
INDEED I WILL MAKE THEM COME AND WORSHIP BEFORE
YOUR FEET AND TO KNOW THAT I HAVE LOVED YOU.”**

Rev. 3:9

Those in what Jesus labels “the synagogue of Satan” claimed they were Jews (the only people of God). However, they persecuted those who believe Jesus to be the Jewish Messiah. In reality, by rejecting Jesus as the Jewish Messiah, they renounced their claim as true Jews, and that is why Jesus labels them as liars.

This distinction between ethnic Jews and faithful true spiritual Jews is also seen in Romans in which Paul states:

**“...THEY ARE NOT ALL ISRAEL WHO ARE OF ISRAEL,
NOR ARE THEY ALL CHILDREN BECAUSE THEY ARE THE SEED OF
ABRAHAM... THAT IS, THOSE WHO ARE THE CHILDREN OF THE FLESH,
THESE ARE NOT THE CHILDREN OF GOD...”** Rom. 9:6

History abounds with the persecution of the early church birthed out of Judaism-the sect cynically called “The Way.” Paul testified:

**“BUT THIS I CONFESS TO YOU, THAT ACCORDING TO THE WAY WHICH
THEY CALL A SECT, SO I WORSHIP THE GOD OF MY FATHERS,
BELIEVING ALL THINGS WHICH ARE WRITTEN IN THE LAW
AND IN THE PROPHETS.”**

Acts 24:14-15

I believe we are yet to see a resurrection of this synagogue of Satan down the road in the church’s future because this is a prophetic letter, not merely a history lesson.

The seventh thing Jesus mentions that this church has:
WHAT SHE HAS:



“PERSEVERANCE”
(Lit. “patient endurance”)

**“FOR YOU HAVE NEED OF
ENDURANCE...”**
Heb. 10:36

**“RUN WITH ENDURANCE THE RACE
SET BEFORE YOU...”**
Heb. 12:1

**“(WE ARE CHRIST’S HOUSE)
IF WE HOLD FAST...
FIRM TO THE END.”**
Heb. 12:1

**“WE HAVE BECOME PARTAKERS
OF CHRIST IF WE HOLD...
STEADFAST TO THE END.”**
Heb. 3:12

**“...PRESSURE, AFFLICTION,
HARDSHIP PRODUCE
UNSWERVING ENDURANCE.”**
Rom. 5:1 Amp.

The call to endurance is a major theme presented by the apostle Paul:



**“AND LET US NOT GROW WEARY
WHILE DOING GOOD,
FOR IN DUE SEASON
WE SHALL REAP,
IF WE DO NOT LOSE HEART.”**
Gal. 6:9

The Psalmist relates how he almost gave up because his eyes were on the easy present life of the wicked rather than preparing for eternity to come:

**“BUT AS FOR ME, MY FEET HAD ALMOST STUMBLER...
FOR I WAS ENVIOUS OF THE BOASTFUL,
WHEN I SAW THE PROSPERITY OF THE WICKED...
THEY ARE NOT IN TROUBLE...THEIR EYES BULGE WITH ABUNDANCE...
THEY ARE ALWAYS AT EASE...THEY INCREASE IN RICHES...
SURELY I HAVE CLEANSER MY HEART IN VAIN...FOR ALL DAY LONG I HAVE
BEEN PLAGUED AND CHASTENED EVERY MORNING...IT WAS TOO PAINFUL
FOR ME--UNTIL I...UNDERSTOOD THEIR END.”**
Psalm 73 (excerpts)

The perseverance of the saints. The Calvinist cherished doctrinal five-point tulip says that the “perseverance of the saints” is totally God’s responsibility. However, God says throughout His Word it is our responsibility to persevere. We are not to give up, nor are we to blow up, but rather we are to grow up. Jesus says of Philadelphia, “You have kept My command to persevere” (Rev. 3:10). God did not keep it for them as the Calvinists wrongly boast.

WHAT SHE HAS:

"BEHOLD,
I COME
QUICKLY!
HOLD
FAST
WHAT
YOU
HAVE,



THAT
NO ONE
MAY
TAKE
YOUR
CROWN."
Rev. 3:11

BROTHERLY LOVE

1 SINCERE LOVE OF BRETHREN-NO HYPOCRISY

HOLY AND TRUE

2 HOLY IN CONDUCT-TRUTH IN INWARD PARTS

KEY OF DAVID

3 HAS A HEART TO DO GOD'S WILL ALWAYS

KEPT GOD'S WORD

4 EMBRACED THE FULL COUNSEL OF GOD

NOT DENIED HIS NAME

5 DEEDS MATCH PROFESSION OF MOUTH

A TRUE JEW

6 A HEART CIRCUMCISED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT

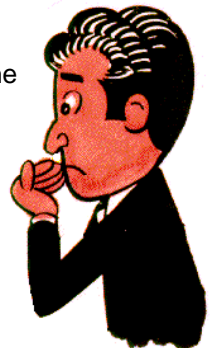
PERSEVERANCE

7 DOES NOT QUIT UNDER PRESSURE

Consider well the seven things for which Jesus commends the church of Philadelphia. These are the things considered sufficient enough to qualify them to be kept from the hour of trial which would come upon the rest of the world. Paul instructed the saints to test their faith for the proper evidence:

"EXAMINE AND TEST AND EVALUATE YOUR OWN SELVES, TO SEE WHETHER YOU ARE HOLDING TO YOUR FAITH AND SHOWING THE PROPER FRUITS OF IT. TEST AND PROVE YOURSELVES...."

2 Cor. 13:5 Amplified



Will you be raptured by Christ? Will you be married to Christ? Will you reign with Christ? You may say, "I hope so" or even "I think so," but I believe we should be analytical to the point that we can say "I know so!"

To know so will require that we be very careful to give heed to Paul's admonition to be among those saints who test themselves. You will need to train your ears to hear the direction of the Holy Spirit:



~ CONCLUSION ~

“THE UPWARD CALL OF GOD IN CHRIST JESUS”



**“BRETHREN,
JOIN IN FOLLOWING
MY EXAMPLE,
AND NOTE THOSE WHO
SO WALK,
AS YOU HAVE
US FOR A PATTERN.”**

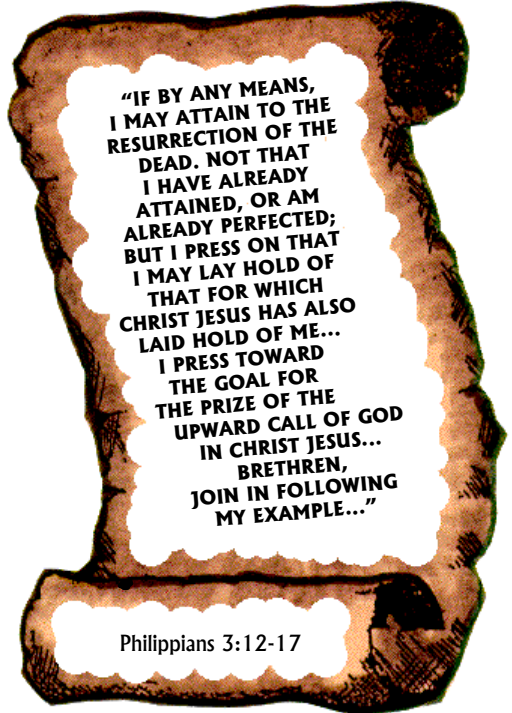
Phil. 3:17

**“THEREFORE, I URGE YOU,
IMITATE ME... MY WAYS IN CHRIST,
AS I TEACH EVERYWHERE
IN EVERY CHURCH”.**

1 Cor. 4:16-17

**“IMITATE ME,
JUST AS I ALSO IMITATE CHRIST”.**

1 Cor. 11:1



There is definitely something amiss in today's presentation of the gospel when it is compared to Paul's stated gospel message above from Philippians. The brand of the grace of God which he presented brought forth motivation throughout his life. In this conclusion we will consider his life's goals and aspirations. In doing so, we shall see that these priorities are greatly lacking in motivating God's people today.

I would highly recommend that you take time to read and re-read what is printed on the next two pages. It is stated to be a pattern for every New Testament believer. It is a litmus test by which we can know what degree of biblical grace is functioning in our lives. It is important to take note of the fact that these passages from Phillipians Chapter Three were penned 23 years after Paul's conversion experience on the road to Damascus. These are personal unattained aspirations held by the apostle Paul late in life. He sets them before every believer as an example to be followed:

**“JOIN IN FOLLOWING MY EXAMPLE, AND NOTE THOSE WHO SO WALK,
AS YOU HAVE US FOR A PATTERN.”**

Phil. 3:17

"...BUT WHAT THINGS WERE GAIN TO ME, THESE I HAVE COUNTED LOSS FOR CHRIST. YET INDEED I ALSO COUNT ALL THINGS LOSS FOR THE EXCELLENCE OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST JESUS MY LORD, FOR WHOM I HAVE SUFFERED THE LOSS OF ALL THINGS, AND COUNT THEM AS RUBBISH, THAT I MAY GAIN CHRIST AND BE FOUND IN HIM, NOT HAVING MY OWN RIGHTEOUSNESS, WHICH IS FROM THE LAW, BUT THAT WHICH IS THROUGH FAITH IN CHRIST, THE RIGHTEOUSNESS WHICH IS FROM GOD BY FAITH; THAT I MAY KNOW HIM AND THE POWER OF HIS RESURRECTION, AND THE FELLOWSHIP OF HIS SUFFERINGS, BEING CONFORMED TO HIS DEATH, IF, BY ANY MEANS, I MAY ATTAIN TO THE RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD. NOT THAT I HAVE ALREADY ATTAINED, OR AM ALREADY PERFECTED; BUT I PRESS ON, THAT I MAY LAY HOLD OF THAT FOR WHICH CHRIST JESUS HAS ALSO LAID HOLD OF ME.

BRETHREN, I DO NOT COUNT MYSELF TO HAVE APPREHENDED; BUT ONE THING I DO, FORGETTING THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE BEHIND AND REACHING FORWARD TO THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE AHEAD,

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THEREFORE LET US, AS MANY AS ARE MATURE, HAVE THIS MIND; AND IF IN ANYTHING YOU THINK OTHERWISE, GOD WILL REVEAL EVEN THIS TO YOU. NEVERTHELESS, TO THE DEGREE THAT WE HAVE ALREADY ATTAINED, LET US WALK BY THE SAME RULE, LET US BE OF THE SAME MIND.

BRETHREN, JOIN IN FOLLOWING MY EXAMPLE, AND NOTE THOSE WHO SO WALK, AS YOU HAVE US FOR A PATTERN. FOR MANY WALK, OF WHOM I HAVE TOLD YOU OFTEN, AND NOW TELL YOU EVEN WEeping, THAT THEY ARE THE ENEMIES OF THE CROSS OF CHRIST: WHOSE END IS DESTRUCTION, WHOSE GOD IS THEIR BELLY, AND WHOSE GLORY IS IN THEIR SHAME -- WHO SET THEIR MIND ON EARTHLY THINGS.

FOR OUR CITIZENSHIP IS IN HEAVEN, FROM WHICH WE ALSO EAGERLY WAIT FOR THE SAVIOR, THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, WHO WILL TRANSFORM OUR LOWLY BODY THAT IT MAY BE CONFORMED TO HIS GLORIOUS BODY, ACCORDING TO THE WORKING BY WHICH HE IS ABLE EVEN TO SUBDUCE ALL THINGS TO HIMSELF."

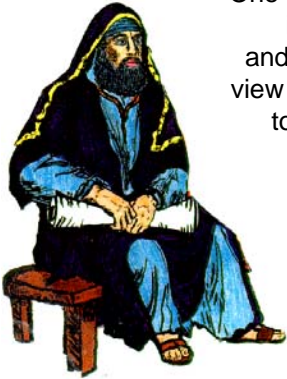
Philippians 3:7-21

Paul's
goals



and
objectives

The highlighted contrast below of Paul's conclusions of what constitutes the present Christian life is in stark contrast to today's conclusions based on the presumptuous provisions of the half-message of the grace of God as presented to God's people today.



One of these two positions is greatly amiss, and I doubt if it is Paul's view since God chose him to author two-thirds of the New Testament epistles!



PAUL'S CONCLUSIONS

"IF I MAY ATTAIN TO THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD... NOT THAT I HAVE ALREADY ATTAINED, NOR AM I ALREADY PERFECTED."

"I PRESS ON TO THE THINGS AHEAD AND FORGET THE THINGS IN THE PAST."

"MY GOAL IS TO LAY HOLD OF WHAT JESUS HAS ALSO LAID HOLD OF ME FOR..."

"THE UPWARD CALL OF GOD IN CHRIST JESUS IS A PRIZE YET TO BE WON..."

MODERN-DAY CONCLUSIONS

"I AM GUARANTEED TO BE INCLUDED IN THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD BECAUSE OF MY JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH THROUGH GRACE."

"THERE IS NOTHING TO PRESS TOWARD-IT WAS ALL COMPLETED FOR ME BY CHRIST ON THE CROSS."

"I GOT IT ALL WHEN I WAS SAVED-I WILL BE RAPTURED BY CHRIST, MARRIED TO CHRIST AND REIGN WITH CHRIST BECAUSE I AM SAVED."

"THE UPWARD CALL OF GOD IN CHRIST JESUS IS A GIFT OF GOD'S GRACE GIVEN TO ALL."

“...BUT WHAT THINGS WERE GAIN TO ME, THESE I HAVE COUNTED LOSS FOR CHRIST. YET INDEED I ALSO COUNT ALL THINGS LOSS FOR THE EXCELLENCE OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST JESUS MY LORD, FOR WHOM I HAVE SUFFERED

1 THE LOSS OF ALL THINGS, AND COUNT THEM AS RUBBISH, THAT I MAY GAIN CHRIST AND BE FOUND IN HIM, NOT HAVING MY OWN RIGHTEOUSNESS, WHICH IS FROM THE LAW, BUT THAT WHICH IS THROUGH FAITH IN CHRIST, THE RIGHTEOUSNESS WHICH IS FROM GOD BY FAITH;

2 THAT I MAY KNOW HIM AND THE POWER OF HIS RESURRECTION, AND THE FELLOWSHIP OF HIS SUFFERINGS, BEING CONFORMED TO HIS DEATH,

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Philippians 3:7-21

Consider the above diagram carefully.

Our justification (1) comes through the saving grace of Jesus Christ.

It is the foundation of eternal life. Paul sets this as his first goal (vs. 9).

Our sanctification (2) comes by embracing the work of the Holy Spirit who provided for us enabling grace. Paul sets this as his second goal (vs. 10).

He describes sanctification as the power of Christ's resurrection at work in his life. That means a changed life. The third priority Paul speaks of deals with the future event of his glorification (3). It will begin at the resurrection of the dead,

at the rapture. Paul does not consider this to be something he already possesses, but rather a goal to press on, that he may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of him (vs. 10). God help us to see that we too have not laid hold of what Jesus has laid hold of us for as yet. It is a future goal.

“...BUT WHAT THINGS WERE GAIN TO ME, THESE I HAVE COUNTED LOSS FOR CHRIST. YET INDEED I ALSO COUNT ALL THINGS LOSS FOR THE EXCELLENCE OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST JESUS MY LORD, FOR WHOM I HAVE SUFFERED

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Philippians 3:7-21

In Paul's statement of justification (1) he lays the foundation to the building.

In his next statement of sanctification (2) he begins to build on the foundation. His eyes are fixed firmly upon glorification (3). This he defines as the “attaining of the resurrection” which he says of himself “I have not already attained, nor am I already perfected”. This is not the confession of today's theology, is it? The act of justification has not fully

“laid hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of us”, or Paul would not have stated otherwise for himself. Jesus seeks not only to Justify His church through the washing of blood, but also to sanctify it by the washing of water by the Word in order that He may present it to Himself, a glorious church, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish (Eph. 5:26-27).

“...BUT WHAT THINGS WERE GAIN TO ME, THESE I HAVE COUNTED LOSS FOR CHRIST. YET INDEED I ALSO COUNT ALL THINGS LOSS FOR THE EXCELLENCE OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST JESUS MY LORD, FOR WHOM I HAVE SUFFERED

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Philippians 3:7-21

Concerning
the apprehension of

“that for which Christ Jesus has laid hold of me”,

(1) He says, “Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended...” (vs 13).

However, this is not the end of Paul’s statement. He goes on to say, “...this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus” (vs. 13b,14). Paul’s theology was not to “live in the past” but rather to zero in with singleness of mind on “those things which are ahead”. Note there are still “things ahead” which are to be “reached for” by us, as believers. Paul does not speak of a gift but rather of a prize. He calls it “the upward call of God in Christ Jesus”. The context in which he states it tells us it begins at the resurrection of the dead. This is the event known as the rapture (see 1 Thess. 4:16-17, 1 Cor. 15:51-52).

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Philippians 3:7-21

Note especially the contrast Paul makes

to a people who (1) “walk as enemies of the cross of Christ” (vs. 18-19).

He could be speaking of the Jews, but he also could be speaking of professing Christians living carnal lives. They are called enemies of the cross of Christ (1) Many of God’s people today love Jesus but not the cross life which Jesus calls them to embrace. Paul goes on to identify what in reality is an old three-fold enemy, “the lust of the eyes” (“...set their minds on earthly things”), “the lust of the flesh” (“...whose god is their belly”), and “the pride of life” (“...(who) glory... in their shame”). Paul is contrasting this lustful manner in which many walk to a separated manner in which we must confess that in our day, few walk.

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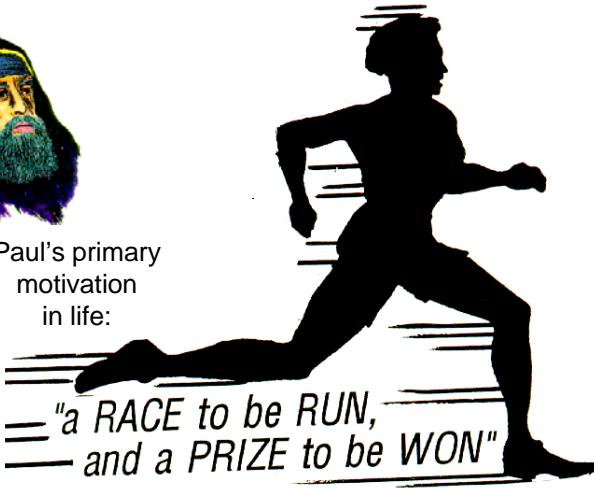
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Philippians 3:7-21

Once we have come to grips with what the apostle Paul presents as “the normal Christian life” in Philippians Three, our whole outlook will change. No longer will we continue to live in the past, but like Paul, we will “forget the things that are past”. We will no longer be able to say “I got it all when I got saved”, but rather we will realize we are to “reach forward to those things which are ahead”. Things like progressive sanctification which will have a direct affect upon the degree of glorification we receive in eternity. We will cease viewing everything promised in God's Word as “gifts”, and realize that He has set before us rewards to be earned. Finally, we will be able to understand why Paul so often spoke of the Christian life as being a “race to be run” with a “prize to be won”:



Paul's primary
motivation
in life:



— "a RACE to be RUN,
— and a PRIZE to be WON"

**"DO YOU NOT KNOW THAT THOSE WHO RUN IN A RACE ALL RUN,
BUT ONE RECEIVES THE PRIZE? RUN IN SUCH A WAY
THAT YOU MAY OBTAIN IT.
AND EVERYONE WHO COMPETES FOR THE PRIZE
IS TEMPERATE IN ALL THINGS.
NOW THEY DO IT TO OBTAIN A PERISHABLE CROWN,
BUT WE (DO IT) FOR AN IMPERISHABLE CROWN.
THEREFORE I RUN THUS:
NOT WITH UNCERTAINTY...
LEST I MYSELF SHOULD BECOME DISQUALIFIED."**

1 Cor. 9:24-27

**"THEREFORE,
SINCE WE ARE SURROUNDED BY SO GREAT A CLOUD OF WITNESSES,
LET US LAY ASIDE EVERY WEIGHT,
AND THE SIN WHICH SO EASILY ENSNARES US,
AND LET US RUN WITH ENDURANCE
THE RACE THAT IS SET BEFORE US."**

Heb. 12:1

**"...ONE THING I DO,
FORGETTING THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE BEHIND
AND REACHING FORWARD TO THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE AHEAD,
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OF THE UPWARD CALL OF GOD IN CHRIST JESUS...
AS MANY AS ARE MATURE,
HAVE THIS MIND...
JOIN IN FOLLOWING MY EXAMPLE...
YOU HAVE US FOR A PATTERN."**

Phil. 3:13-17

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



“THE WAY, THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE TABERNACLE”
was founded in Pastor Shupe’s home in 1980 after serving as a
lay teacher in the Assemblies of God for several years.

The church now resides in this building at
5690 Yukon Street,
in “Olde Town Arvada”, Colorado, 80002.

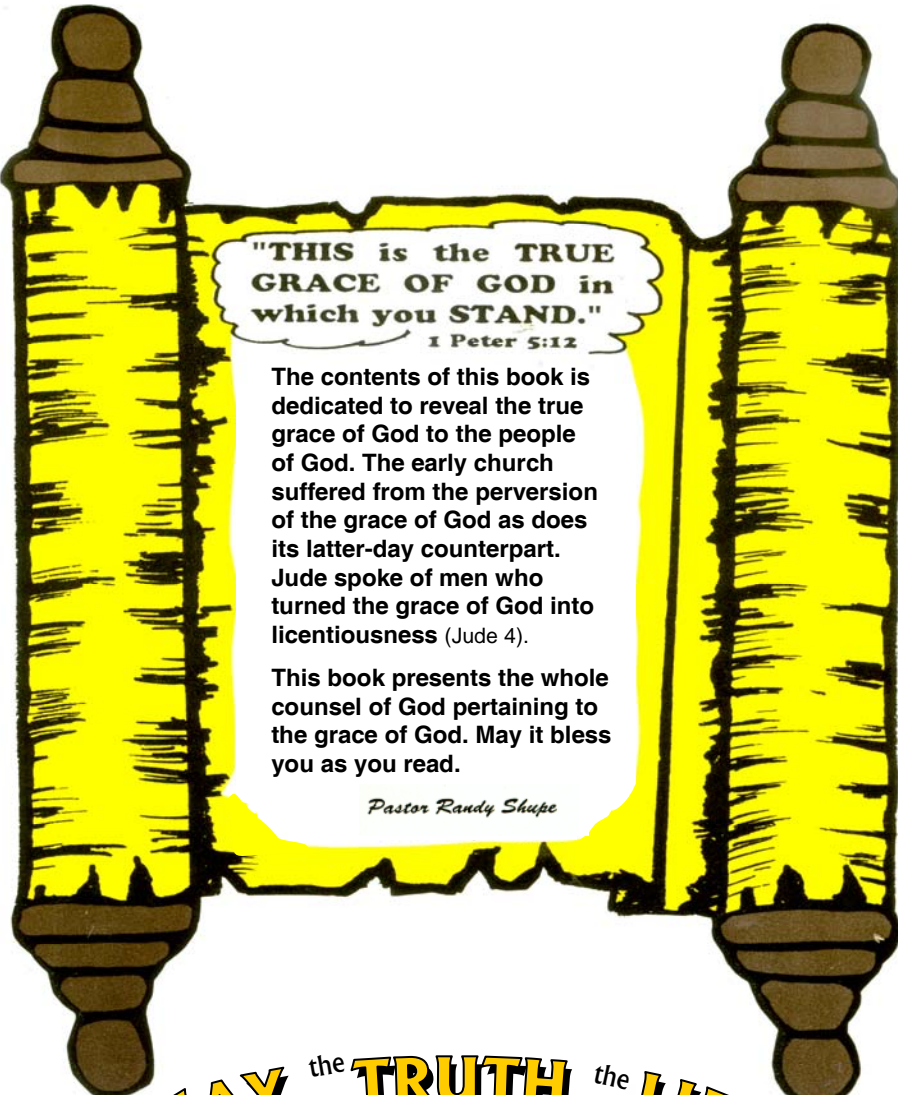
Deeply impressed by the
illustrated teachings of the
late Clarence Larkin, and
convinced that “a picture is
worth a thousand words”,
Pastor Shupe has combined
his artistic talents with his
God-given gift of revelational
teaching.

The illustrations in his books
and videos represent some
of the visual aids he
prepares for the
feeding of his flock.



Pastor Randy Lucette

You may reach him by phone at 303-423-1325, or write to the address
above. His website location is www.PastorRandyShupe.com.



**"THIS is the TRUE
GRACE OF GOD in
which you STAND."**

1 Peter 5:12

The contents of this book is dedicated to reveal the true grace of God to the people of God. The early church suffered from the perversion of the grace of God as does its latter-day counterpart. Jude spoke of men who turned the grace of God into licentiousness (Jude 4).

This book presents the whole counsel of God pertaining to the grace of God. May it bless you as you read.

Pastor Randy Shupe

the **WAY,** ^{the} **TRUTH,** ^{the} **LIFE**
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