GRACE AND MERCY

Just what is the grace and mercy of God? Are these just religious sounding words that have no relevance to the reality of life today or the future. Or do these words convey important aspects of the Sovereign God's good news message for mankind.

Believe it or not, the Sovereign God's little understood personality traits of grace and mercy have a major impact on your eternal destiny. It is because of God's grace and mercy that you exist and that you have an opportunity to become an immortal spirit-being in his family and kingdom.

Therefore, if you are interested in a future beyond this physical existence you might want to pay careful attention to the information contained in this broadcast. Because, you will not find very many who know and understand what I am about to tell you.

In order to understand the significance of the Sovereign Father's grace and mercy that he has shown and will continue to show to mankind. We will have to begin our search at the very beginning of human history.

In the first chapter of Genesis verse 26, we read:

"And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness:" (Gen.1:26 KJV).

The word "God" in verse 26 is a uniplural Hebrew word that means more than one being. This verse clearly shows that there are two persons involved in the decision to create mankind.

The apostle Paul tells us is Ephesians chapter 3, verse 9 that God the Father created all things by Jesus Christ. And the first chapter of John tells us that the same thing.

As in any organization, there is someone in charge and someone else who carries out the directives of the one in charge, and it is no different in the government of God.

When mankind was created, God planned for people

to prosper under his guidance and eventually enter into his Family and Kingdom as spirit-beings. However, when we review the Genesis record, we find that the first two humans rebelled against God and rejected his plan through which they and their descendants could fulfill the purpose for which they were created. (Gen.3:1-23; 4:1-7). This rejection of God and his plan has continued from the time of Adam and Eve to this very day:

From the time of Adam to the days of Noah, humans were allowed to live and do their own thing, but during the days of Noah, people had become so wicked and rebellious, that God was sorry he had created the human race: Notice what is said of the human condition after only a few hundred years of their existence on earth:

"And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the Lord was sorry that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it makes me sad that I have made them" (Gen.6:5-7 KJV Para.).

The Creator God was grief-stricken and extremely discouraged because of people's wickedness and their rejection of him and the opportunity that he had offered to them. Because they had chosen the way of evil over the way of good and would not change from their wicked lifestyle, God decided to kill them all, except for Noah and his family. It is a sad commentary, that out of all the humans on earth, Noah was the only righteous individual that God could find on the entire planet.

Not wanting his human creation to continue to suffer under the oppression of evil any longer, God destroyed all of mankind in a worldwide flood, except Noah and his family.

Although the destruction of the earth and almost all life on it seems to be the opposite of grace and mercy, as we will see God's decision to destroy the earth and most of mankind was indeed a gracious and a merciful act.

Only eight people survived the flood. This small remnant was all that was left of a race that had existed for almost two thousand years, and had populated the earth with millions and perhaps billions of people.

God told Noah and this small remnant to repopulate the earth, and promised that he would never again destroy the earth and mankind with a flood. As a token of this promise, God said he would cause a change in the atmospheric conditions so that rainbows could be seen from time to time as a reminder of this promise (Gen.9:7-17).

Centuries after God had destroyed all but eight people in a great flood, he chose the Israelitish descendants of his friend Abraham to begin the next phase of his plan through which humanity could become sons of God and enter into the Family and Kingdom of God (Ex.19:5-6; Deut.7:6-9). However, these people also rejected God and his plan to save them from eternal death (Jer.3:1-25; Isa.16:1-34).

The Creator God had always offered grace and mercy to his people, but demanded love and obedience from those to whom he showed his grace and mercy.

In Ex 20:5-6 God said to the Israelites:

"I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; And showing mercy to thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

And in the Book of Numbers chapter 14, verse18, he told them: :The LORD is longsuffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression.

GRACE AND MERCY

Although the Creator God had always offered grace and mercy to his people. After he came to earth as Jesus Christ, he made known and offered a different kind of grace and mercy. This grace and mercy was spiritual as well as physical and was offered by his heavenly Father.

In many of the apostle Paul's letters we find greetings and blessings containing the phrases 'grace and peace' and 'grace, mercy and peace be upon you'.

In the introduction to his first letter to Timothy, Paul said: "To Timothy, my own son in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord".1.Tim.1:2 KJV

Paul said to the Corinthians: "To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those having been set apart for a holy purpose in Jesus Christ, called to be saints, with all others who call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place, both theirs and ours: Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ". 1.Cor.1:2-3 Para.

And to the Church at Rome he said: "To all that be in Rome, beloved of the Sovereign God, called to be saints: Grace be to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world. For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son". Rom.1:7-9 Para.

After Paul had preached and taught the Father's message for many years, he knew that his ministry was drawing to a close; thus, he went to Jerusalem knowing that he was about to lose his freedom and perhaps his life. Nevertheless, he went because he was thoroughly committed to the task he had been given. Notice that Paul calls this message the good news of the grace of God

"And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: Except that the holy spirit witnesses in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. But none of these things move me, neither do I count my life dear to me, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God". Acts 20:22-24 Para.

The good news message that Jesus, the apostles, and

the early church proclaimed and taught concerning God the Father's grace, is an integral part of the gospel message, because God's grace, mercy, and compassion toward humanity is the foundation upon which salvation is based.

It is because of the Father's grace, mercy, and compassion toward humanity that there is a good news message. It is because of the Father's grace, mercy, compassion, and great love for humanity that he allowed the Creator to come to earth in human form to save humanity from eternal death and to offer eternal and immortal life in his Heavenly Father's family and kingdom.

But, just what is grace as defined in the Bible?

The English word 'grace' is derived form a Greek word that has two basic meanings in the New Testament: 'favor shown to one who is undeserving of favor' and 'being favored with divine spiritual influence from God.'

The word 'grace' as used in regard to those who are called to salvation during the gospel age, refers to the divine favor of God toward these people. In some instances, it refers to being favored with God's spiritual influence in their lives.

When the word 'grace' is associated with the Sovereign Father and with Christ, it always has the implication of being given from them as a free and undeserved gift to the recipient.

There are three important facts about the grace and mercy that comes from the Sovereign God.

- 1. The Father was not obligated to favor humanity with forgiveness of sin and salvation. Before or after Adam and Eve disobeyed the Creator's instructions not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.
- 2. The Father's favor cannot be earned, nor is it something that one deserves because of one's own effort.
- 3. The Father extends his favor to humanity

because it is what he wants to give those for whom he has great concern, compassion, and love. See Jn.3:16.

THE FATHER'S GRACE AND MERCY

It is also important to understand that there is only one Sovereign God who is above all else that does exist and he is the one who allowed the Creator God to come to earth and sacrifice himself for mankind as the Messiah. When the decision was made concerning the method through which mankind would be able to have their violation of God's law forgiven and receive redemption and salvation, there were only two immortal beings in existence—the Sovereign God and the Creator God.

The decision to allow the Creator God to divest himself of his immortality and become human not only placed the Creator's future existence in great jeopardy, it also had a tremendous impact upon the Sovereign God's future. If the Creator had failed in his mission, he would have died and ceased to exist forever, and the Sovereign God would have lost his closest friend and companion. God the Father would have been the only immortal being in existence. He would have had no one like himself with whom to share eternity. The Sovereign God's decision to allow the Creator God to attempt to save humanity was a selfless act that shows a love of awesome proportions for mankind.

Human words or emotion cannot begin to adequately express the grace, mercy, compassion, and love that God the Father and Jesus Christ have for humanity. And words cannot adequately describe the price that the Father and his Son were willing to pay for our redemption and salvation.

The apostle John was inspired to record this about the God the Father's divine favor through Christ.

"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth. John bare witness of him, and cried saying, This was he of whom I spoke, He that comes after me is preferred before me: for he was before me. And of his fullness have we all received, and grace for

grace. For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. No man has seen the Father at any time; however, the only begotten Son, that is in the bosom of the Father, he has declared him" (Jn.1:14-18 Para.).

It is only through Jesus Christ that the good news of the Father's favor toward humanity is revealed, and only those who truly believe the message that Jesus brought from the Father have any hope of having his favor bestowed upon them. This is because it is only through Jesus Christ that the Father's good news message is revealed:

The apostle John said of the Father's Love:

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes on him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved". Jn.3:16-17 KJV See Heb.2:6-10.

In his letter to the church at Ephesus, the apostle Paul said the following concerning the great favor that God the Father bestows upon all whom he calls to salvation.

Beginning in chapter 1, verse 1:

"Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, to the saints being in Ephesus, and being faithful in Christ Jesus: Grace to you, and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ".

Paul greets the elect at Ephesus with the blessing of the grace and peace that was being bestowed upon them from God the Father through Jesus Christ who is the administrator of the Father's grace and peace to his earthly children, then Paul says:

"Blessed is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavens with Christ: According to his choosing of us through Christ before the foundation of the world, for us to be holy and without blame before him in love". Vs.3-4

What Paul says to the Ephesians concerning being

chosen before the foundation of the world is a very difficult concept to explain to anyone who does not have the spirit of God dwelling within them; nevertheless, it is true.

God the Father has favored some people above others, calling them to participate in a better resurrection with better rewards than the rest of humanity and to have a special relationship with him that is not afforded to others during this age of salvation.

Article Offer

If you want a clear biblical understanding of why some people are call to salvation during this age, and some are not. And what the rewards are for participation in the first resurrection, get a copy of my study on these two important subjects.

Continuing in verses 5 of Ephesians chapter 1:

"Having predestinated us to adoption through Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, in which he favored us in the beloved, In whom we have redemption through his blood, that is the forgiveness of sin, according to the richness of his grace; that he caused to abound toward us in all wisdom and understanding; making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he proposed in himself".

Everyone deserves to die. No one deserves eternal or immortal life in the Family of God just because they are one of God's creations. It is only because of the Father's grace, mercy, and great love for humanity that he extends his forgiveness and salvation to us.

Not only has God the Father shown great favor to those he has predestined to be his sons before the foundation of the earth; he also blesses them with spiritual knowledge and understanding.

Continuing in verse 9:

"The Father worked in Christ, raising him from the dead—yes he seated him at his right hand in heaven,

Far above all principality, authority, power, lordship, and every name being named, not only in this age, but also in the coming age: and the Father put all things under his feet, and made him head over all things to the church, Which is his body". Eph. 1:19-23 Para.

Paul says that, it is the Father who has the power to raise the dead and give positions of power and authority to those he calls to salvation. The Father has placed his Son, Jesus Christ, over all things except himself and it is through Christ that the Sovereign Father's grace is expressed to mankind.

Paul was very careful to explain to the Corinthians that although Christ has great authority, the Sovereign Father is superior to him in authority." Paul said:

"For he must reign [speaking of Jesus Christ] until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. "For he [speaking of God the Father] has put everything under his feet [speaking of Jesus Christ]." Now when it says that "everything" has been put under him, it is clear that this does not include God himself, who put everything under Christ.1.Cor.15:25-27 (NIV)

It is the Sovereign Father who favored some with a call to salvation during the age of the Patriarchs, during the existence of ancient Israel, and during the age of the early church. And it is the Father who favors some today with the opportunity to understand his message of good news and participate in the first resurrection of the dead (Jn.6:44,65).

Jesus said: No man can come to me, except the Father which has sent me draws him: and I will raise him up at the last day. John 6:44 (KJV)

In Ephesians chapter 2, Paul explain the greatness of the Sovereign Father's favor to those whom he calls to salvation during this age. Paul said:

"And he worked in you who were once dead because you disobeyed him and violated his law, as a way of life according to the ways of this world, and according to the ruler and authority of the air [That is, Satan the Devil], the evil spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience: Among whom we also conducted ourselves in the past in the lusts of our flesh, doing the things willed of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as the rest". vs.1-3

Paul told those of the Father's children at Ephesus that, before they were saved, they were under the death penalty, awaiting execution for the violation of his law. This is the same exact situation that all who are not spiritual sons of God today find themselves in. All of mankind, past, present, and future are condemned to death and will die for all eternity unless they accept the Sovereign Father's grace and mercy that is offered through the sacrificial blood of his Son Jesus Christ:

Continuing at verse 4 of Ephesians chapter 2:

"But the Father, being rich in mercy, and because of his great love for us, who were dead in our sins, made us alive together with Christ—by his grace you are being saved—and he has raised us up, and has seated us together in heaven in Christ Jesus: That he might show in ages to come the exceedingly great riches of his grace in his kindness toward us in Christ Jesus."For by grace you are saved through faith; and not of yourselves; it is a gift from the Father; and comes not through your own efforts. . ." vs.4-9. See also Acts 15:10-11; Rom.3:22-25; Tit.3:5.

In his great mercy, the Father has favored a few undeserving individuals in the past and is favoring a few today with forgiveness of sin and as a witnesses of his great love and compassion for his creatures, in order for them to serve him in his plan for the salvation of all mankind.

Paul told Timothy in his second letter to him, that it is not because of a person's own efforts that the Father extends the opportunity for redemption during the gospel age of salvation; he does so for his own purpose: Paul said:

"Then do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but suffer hardship with the gospel according to the power of God; he having saved us, and having called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, given to us in Jesus before eternal times." 2.Tim.1:8-9 Para.

In Romans chapter 5, Paul explains the Sovereign Father's gift of grace in the light of his law and the penalty mankind has incurred by violation his law:

Paul said, "For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. But death reigned from the time of Adam until the time of Moses, even over those who had not disobeyed like Adam. Moses being a type of the coming Christ. However, the gift of grace is not unlike the transgression; in that by the transgression of Adam many died, so much more by the grace of the Father, and his gift that is in the one man Jesus Christ overflows to many. Again, the gift of grace is also unlike the condemnation that followed Adam's transgression. Rom.5:13-17 Para.

Paul reveals that before Moses, people were under the death penalty for the violation of God's law, because there was no method by which they could obtain salvation. Moses came as a type of Christ as a deliverer and law giver (Acts 7:35-38). Through Moses, God revealed his plan for the salvation of humanity through the prophetic meaning of his sacrificial worship system and commanded observances.

Paul also said, "The gift [That is, the Father's favor to undeserving humanity] shall not have the same result as Adam's transgression that caused condemnation to come upon all people. For if by the transgression of Adam death reigned, how much more will life reign for those who are receiving the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness to rule in their life through Christ" (Rom.5:14-17 Para.).

Paul shows us that Adam's disobedience brought the penalty of eternal death upon all his descendants, and that it is through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ that a person has the opportunity to have their death penalty removed and obtain eternal salvation.

Did people sin before Moses? Yes, they sinned and

they died, but they did not die the second death in the Lake of Fire from which there is no return.

However, after the law was given by Moses, sin was defined and mankind could be held guilty and accountable under the law and the second death could be administered to the guilty.

Only after person understands the law and violates it are they accountable for their guilt. This shows God's great fairness and mercy toward mankind.

Remember the Creator God's warning to Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden:

"And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you shall not eat of it: for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die." Gen.2:16-17 (KJV)

It is because of Adam's disobedience to God's instructions in the Garden of Eden that physical death came upon mankind.

It is because of the violation of God's law that the second death is to be administered.

Article Offer

Throughout human history anyone who wanted to worship the true God had to do so within the boundaries of very strict rules that were set forth by God. The foundational elements of this worship system are shown through the sacrificial system and the commanded observances and holy convocations.

The early church that was founded by Jesus Christ understood, kept, and taught the meanings of the sacrifices and the commanded observances.

If you serious about knowing how the Sovereign God expects you to worship him. Get a copy of my study, The Father's Temple Worship System Today (file b6w13). In this study you will find a new dimension of understanding into God's plan for the salvation of humanity past, present, and future that has been hidden for many centuries.

Paul tells us that Adam's disobedience brought the penalty of eternal death upon all his descendants, and that, it is through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, that a person has the opportunity to have their death penalty removed and obtain eternal salvation.

The Sovereign Father caused humanity to come into existence, thereby giving us his first great gift, the gift of life. His second great gift, is his grace toward us, in wanting to save us from eternal death and allowing the Creator God to come to earth as the Messiah, in an attempt to save us from our own destructive nature.

If it were not for his grace and mercy toward us, we would be executed for the violation of his law and cease to exist forever. But because of his gift of grace and his mercy toward us, we have the opportunity to exist forever as a son in his divine family.

The Messiah

Over nineteen centuries ago, God the Father sent his Son to offer an easier and more perfect method by which humanity could obtain eternal life, become his sons, and enter into his Family and Kingdom (Heb.10:1-21). When the Father's Son, in the personage of Jesus Christ, proclaimed the good news of his Father's awesome and wonderful offer to the Jews, they not only rejected this offer but also murdered him for bringing them this good news (Acts 2:23-32).

Although there was much proof available to the Jews during Jesus' ministry that he was indeed the Messiah who came with great power and authority from the Father, there were very few who believed his message of repentance. Very few thought that they needed to change their attitude and behavior toward God and their fellow man, because most of these people thought there was nothing wrong with their attitude and behavior. As many of the scriptures indicate, the Jews were perfectly happy with their spiritual condition and were only looking to better their physical circumstances. This same condition exists today among people of all religions, philosophies, and political persuasions.

After the murder of the Messiah, the Sovereign Father chose a people for the purpose of proclaiming his plan for the salvation of humanity. And he also had his plan published in almost every language on earth in hopes that some would heed his good news message. However, history has shown that since the death and resurrection of his Son, most who have heard this message have rejected it.

THE WRATH OF GOD

Because of mankind's rejection of the father's good news message; the earth and its inhabitants are about to enter into a new and different relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ. However, prior to this new order of things and new relationship, God will pour out his wrath upon his chosen people and the rest of humanity because of their great wickedness.

The wrath of God that is to be poured upon the earth and its inhabitants will bring an end to about six thousand years of God's patience in dealing with rebellious people and their evil ways. God's chosen people, Israel, along with the rest of humanity have shown through the centuries that they cannot or will not live righteously or govern themselves fairly and equitably. Therefore, he will bring an end to human rule and institute a new order of things for the purpose of furthering his plan and purpose for his human creation.

The prophet Joel records that even in his wrath, God is willing to show favor and mercy to those who call out to him for deliverance in the right attitude. God said:

And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the Lord comes. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the Lord hath said, and in the remnant whom the Lord shall call. Joel 2:30-32

The people who live during the fulfilment of this prophecy and who acknowledge God, seek his forgiveness for their sins, and begin to obey him, will receive his grace, mercy, and protection during this time of great trouble.

SUMMARY

The Father's grace and mercy are two wonderful aspects of his good news message to humanity that have seldom been taught since the demise and disappearance of the apostolic church.

The grace and mercy that the Father offers to those who will hear and heed his message are not only for this day and age, but is also for the time after the return of Jesus Christ to rule the earth.

The Father is extremely concerned for humanity and it is his intention to offer salvation to all people. He promises to place those who respond in a positive manner to his message of grace under his care and protection for all eternity as a reward for their obedience to him.

I see that my time is up, If you want to know more about the Sovereign Father's grace and mercy and his awesome plan for you, or more about the other subjects I have briefly touched on in this in this broadcast, Write to me at the at the address given in the following announcement. Until next time this is Bud Cocherell for Bible Research .org.

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