



LAW AND GRACE GOD'S UNMERITED FAVOUR

by Bill Subritzky

Did you realise a man who was involved in the murder and torture of Christians was chosen by God to write two thirds of the New Testament?

Paul stood by watching with approval the stoning to death of the first martyr, Stephen (Acts 7:58-59). Paul was on his way to Damascus in order to find any people (Christians) who were of the Way so that he could bring them bound to Jerusalem. (Acts 9:2).

He put many of the saints into prison and when they were put to death he cast his vote against them. He punished them in every synagogue and compelled them to blaspheme because he was so enraged against them. He persecuted them even to foreign cities. (Acts 26:10-11).

The grace of God is wonderful. When we look at the life of the apostle Paul then we begin to understand how wide and deep, how high and how wonderful is the grace of God.

The apostle Peter says that before he met Jesus he was involved in licentiousness (sexual immorality), lusts, drunkenness, wild parties, drinking parties and abominable idolatries. Yet despite this background Jesus said to him, "Come after Me and I will make you fishers of men."

This shows the sovereign grace of God to call such a sinner to Himself and appoint him to be a great apostle and preach His gospel."

When Peter was instructed by the Holy Spirit to go to the house of a Roman centurion named Cornelius, he had been told to act in a manner that was contrary to

Jewish tradition. This had made it unlawful for a Jewish man to keep company with or to go to one of another nation. (Acts 10:28).

As Peter began to speak to Cornelius and his family, the Holy Spirit fell upon these Gentiles in a similar way as it had happened on the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit fell upon the Jews.

As Peter heard them speak in tongues and magnify God he was astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on them. This was the grace of God. (Acts 10:45-46).

These are just some examples of the grace (unmerited favour) of God.

1. We are saved by the grace of God

We are saved by the grace of God through faith and that not of ourselves, “it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.” (Ephesians 2:8-9).

“But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more than having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.” (Romans 5:8-9).

Therefore it is only through God's unmerited favour (grace) toward us that we are saved.

2. But what should we do about sin?

Christ has taken our sin upon Himself on the cross and paid the penalty for it.

Through His precious blood we have been redeemed (bought back) from the hand of the devil.

Should we now continue in sin?

“Certainly not!” (Romans 6:2).

3. An overemphasis on the grace of God can lead to diminishing the need to abstain from sin. This can lead to deception by the belief that we can continue in sin because the grace of God allows us to do so.

4. We should not be the slaves of sin.

On the cross our old nature was crucified with Christ so “that we should no longer be slaves of sin.” (Romans 6:6).

5. Our bodies should be slaves of righteousness for holiness. Therefore we should present our bodies to be “slaves of righteousness for holiness.” (Romans 6:19).

6. The wages of sin is death.

"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 6:23).

7. Grace teaches us to abstain from sin.

"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 Saviour 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.

Speak these things, exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no one despise you." (Titus 2:11-15).

8. The law of the 10 commandments set out in the Old Testament is holy and still applies to us.

"The law is holy, and the commandment holy, just and good." (Romans 7:12).

Jesus said He came to fulfil the law. (Matthew 5:17).

9. We are warned that we can lose our salvation by practising sin.

10. The provisions of the moral law (being the 10 commandments from Exodus 20) are reaffirmed in many New Testament scriptures such as the following.

First commandment

(1). "You shall have no other gods before me." (Exodus 20:3).

New Testament

Matthew 6:33

"But **seek first the kingdom of God** and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you."

Matthew 22:37

"Jesus said to him, 'You shall **love the Lord your God with all your heart**, with all your soul, and with all your mind.'

Second Commandment

(2). Idolatry. "You shall not make for yourself a carved image – any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the

water under the earth;" (Exodus 20:4).

New Testament

Romans 1:25

"who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen."

1 Corinthians 6:9

"Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor **idolaters**, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites,"

1 Corinthians 10:14

"Therefore, my beloved, flee from **idolatry**."

Galatians 5:20

"**idolatry**, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies,"

Ephesians 5:5

"For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an **idolater**, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God."

Colossians 3:5

"Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is **idolatry**."

Third Commandment

(3). Taking the name of God in vain. "You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain." (Exodus 20:7).

New Testament

Colossians 3:8

"But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, **blasphemy**, filthy language out of your mouth."

Fourth Commandment

(4). Sabbath Day. "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy." (Exodus 20:8)

The early church transferred the observance of this to **Sunday, the day of the Lord's resurrection**.

New Testament

This is confirmed by the following scriptures:

Acts 20:7

“Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight.”

1 Corinthians 16:1-2

“Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, so you must do also: **On the first day of the week** let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come.”

Furthermore, early writers such as Justin Martyr (150 A.D.) confirm this in their writings:

"And on the day called **Sunday**, all who live in cities or in the country gather together to one place, and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read, as long as time permits; then, when the reader has ceased, the president verbally instructs, and exhorts to the imitation of these good things.

Then we all rise together and pray, and, as we have before said, when our prayer is ended, bread and wine and water are brought, and the president in like manner offers prayers and thanksgivings, according to his ability, and the people assent, saying Amen; and there is a distribution to each, and a participation of that over which thanks has been given, and to those who are absent a portion is sent by the deacons.

“And they who are well to do, and willing, give what each thinks fit; and what is collected is deposited with the president, who succours the orphans and widows and those who, through sickness or any other cause, are in want, and those who are in bonds and the strangers sojourning among us, and in a word takes care of all who are in need.

But Sunday is the day on which we all hold our common assembly, because it is the first day on which God, having wrought a change in the darkness and matter, made the world; and Jesus Christ our Saviour on the same day rose from the dead."

(Excerpt from "First Apology" by Justin Martyr.)

Fifth Commandment

(5). Honour your father and mother. “Honour your father and mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God is giving you.” (Exodus 20:12).

New Testament

Ephesians 6:2-3

“Honor your father and mother,” which is the first commandment with promise: “that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth.”

Sixth Commandment

(6). Murder. “You shall not murder.” (Exodus 20:13).

New Testament

Romans 1:29

“being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, **murder**, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; they are whisperers,”

Galatians 5:21

“envy, **murders**, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.”

Seventh Commandment

(7). Adultery. “You shall not commit adultery.” (Exodus 20:14).

New Testament

Romans 1:29

“being filled with all unrighteousness, **sexual immorality**, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; they are whisperers,”

1 Corinthians 6:9

“Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor **adulterers**, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites,”

Galatians 5:19

“Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: **adultery**, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness,”

Eighth Commandment

(8). Stealing. “You shall not steal.” (Exodus 20:15).

New Testament

1 Corinthians 6:10

“nor **thieves**, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God.”

Ninth Commandment

(9). Bearing false witness. “You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour.” (Exodus 20:16).

New Testament

Colossians 3:9

“Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds,”

Tenth Commandment

(10). Covetousness. “You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor’s.” (Exodus 20:17).

New Testament

Romans 13:9

For the commandments, “You shall not commit adultery,” “You shall not murder,” “You shall not steal,” “You shall not bear false witness,” “**You shall not covet**,” and if there is any other commandment, are all summed up in this saying, namely, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

1 Corinthians 6:9-10

“Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor **covetous**, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God.”

11. Warnings against sinning.

We are warned many times in the New Testament that if we abuse the grace of God by deliberate sin we can lose our salvation.

The Bible describes sin as follows:

1 Corinthians 6:9-10:

“Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived.

Neither fornicators (sex outside of marriage)

Nor idolaters (putting other things ahead of God)
Nor adulterers
Nor homosexuals
Nor sodomites
Nor thieves
Nor covetous
Nor drunkards
Nor revilers (cursing other people)
Nor extortioners (taking other people's money by threat)
will inherit the kingdom of God."

Colossians 3:8:

Uncleanness (impurity)
Using bad language
Dirty jokes
Licentiousness (indecent) e.g. pornography
(Galatians 5:19, Ephesians 5:3-4)

Galatians 5:20-21:

Sorcery i.e. Witchcraft

Examples:

Fortune telling (horoscopes),
some forms of heavy metal rock music,
Ouija boards,
drugs (wrong kind),
charms,
New Age e.g. worship of the creation,
Spiritism: Séances,
Freemasonry,
Martial Arts i.e. Kung Fu, Aikido, Tae Kwon Do, Karate, Tai Chi, Judo (rooted in Taoism and Buddhism),
Druids Lodge, Hypnosis (Hinduism Goddess Shiva), Yoga, TM, ESP, Worship of the creation (Idolatry) (Romans 1:25).

Those practicing...

Hatred
Contentions e.g. quarrelsome, causing fights
Jealousies
Outburst of wrath
Selfish ambitions

Dissensions (causing fights)
Heresies e.g. Jehovah Witnesses and Mormons
Envy
Murders e.g. deliberate unnecessary abortion
Drunkenness
Revelries (wild parties)

Revelation 21:8:

Also those who are...
Cowardly (refusing to follow Christ)
Unbelievers
Abominable
Liars

12. Conclusion

Even though we are under God's grace in the New Covenant we must live righteously and abstain from sin. We must do this if we are to inherit the kingdom of God.

Compiled by Bill Subritzky and produced by Dove Ministries
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