

# **Amazing Grace**

by

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### **GRACE SO SACRED**

*"The gospel of the grace of God!"* That is the summary of the Christian message. (1) It is a gospel-good news concerning what God is doing. (2) It is a gospel of grace, the message of what God is doing for mankind that man does not deserve to be done for him. The Christian gospel is a gospel of grace.

Grace is a basic Bible doctrine. There are more than one hundred twenty five references to grace in the New Testament scriptures. Total references in the Bible add to more than two hundred. God wants man to know that He is a God of grace. What is grace? Many definitions have been suggested. (1) Grace is God doing more than we deserve for us. That somewhat catches the idea, but is not sufficient to express the full Bible concept of the grace of God. It is not merely God doing good in the absence of our merit, but God doing good for us in spite of our demerit. (2) Grace is God's love beyond the bounds of love. It is "love out-loving love." But again, it is more than that. Grace is more than emotion; it is love in action. Grace is love reaching out and lifting. Grace is always God's energetic initiative in behalf of mankind. (3) Grace is God's response to man's need. The Bible pictures man as fallen in sin. He is born with a sin-nature, spiritually dead, and subject to Satan. He is totally unable to remedy his condition. Grace is God's redemptive response to man's pitiful need. It is God's everything given

for man's nothing. Grace announces, "God is for you; God is on your side." The grace of God is simply God in His gracious attitude and action coming to man's rescue. Grace shows God for us who are against Him.

Here is how to get some idea of grace. Suppose you could form a mathematical equation which would encompass all the love of God, mercy of God, righteousness of God, truth of God, faithfulness of God, power of God, purpose of God, and redemption of God working in harmonious cooperation for the salvation of spiritually bankrupt man. That is a glimpse of grace. In view of that definition of grace, share my amazement as I read in Titus 2:11-14, *"The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."* Well might all respond, "What amazing grace" That is the good news announced in the Christian message: *"the gospel of the grace of God,"* Acts 20:24.

### **GRACE IS SACRED.**

It is *"the grace of God"* Titus 2: 11. There may be many gracious acts manifest among men, but the supreme act of grace was shown when God came to deal graciously with us in Jesus Christ. The Bible attributes grace to all three persons of the Holy Trinity.

**God the Father is a God of grace.** In I Peter 5:10, He is called, *"...the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus..."* Here are selected quotations from Holy Scripture, which describe Him whom we call God the Father. The Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin Exodus 34:6,7. *"The Lord your God is gracious and merciful, and will not turn away his face from you"* 2 Chronicles 30:9. *"Thou art a God ready to pardon, gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness"*, and Nehemiah 9:17. Do you catch the thrust of it? God is *"...a god full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth,"* Psalm 86:15.

**God the Son is a God of grace.** John 1:1 reads of Him, *"in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."* Verse 14 continues, *"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."* The grace of God was so manifest in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, that the Bible could say, *"...grace and truth came by Jesus Christ,"* John 1:17. The greatest expression of grace in all human experience was in the person of God's Son. *"For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich,"* 2 Cor. 8:9

Hold up your hand with the fingers separated. Suppose there is a letter of the alphabet printed on each finger. On the thumb is printed "G," on the index finger an "R," on the big finger an "A," on the ring finger a "C" and on the little finger an "E." Your fingers would spell out a word: G-R-A-C-E, grace. Now, let us make a sentence from those letters with each consecutive word of the sentence beginning with the consecutive letters imaginatively printed on your finger. "G" stands for "God." "R" stands for "riches." "A" stands for "at." "C" stands for "Christ's." "E" stands for "expense." Put those letters together and you have an excellent definition of grace: "God's riches at Christ's expense"

**God the Holy Spirit is a God of grace.** Who among us deserves the ministry of the Holy Spirit? Not one Yet, He moved in grace to make us aware of spiritual need, to call us to Christ,

to work in us the miracle of regeneration when we trusted Jesus as personal Savior, to seal us unto the day of redemption, to take up permanent residence in us by His blessed indwelling, to teach us God's Word, to guide us in divine service, to assure us of salvation, to aid us in prayer, to empower us in witness, and to minister constantly in us that we might live the life of eternity in the context of time, the life of God in the body of man. The Holy Spirit makes the precious purpose and provisions of God available to us in a moment-by-moment ministry. Indeed, He is a God of grace. God is the sovereign of the Universe. *"He doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, what doest thou?"* Dan. 4:35.

Come before the throne of God. His power would make you cringe in fear, were that all you know of Him. But you can come before His throne and discover with glad surprise that God's throne is a throne of grace where you can *"...obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need,"* Hebrews 4:16. God is such a God of grace that His throne, from which He governs the universe, has become a throne of grace.

Behold the grace of God! It lies at the heart of the Christian gospel. It is manifest in the redemptive ministry of Jesus Christ. It is experienced by the blessed work of the Holy Spirit. The grace of God, the incredibly generous and utterly unexpected action of God, is available to you. God is on your side; he is for you. For every need you have, there is the corresponding provision of grace from God.

Turn to God with all your heart. Lay all your burdens, needs, failures, and sins before Him. He will so respond to your need with His provision that you can personally experience the "amazing grace" of God.

## GRACE IS SAVING

Behold the saving character of divine grace. Titus 2:11 reads, "The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men..." Grace is sacred in its origin, for it is the Grace of God. Grace is saving in its purpose, for it is the grace of God that "brings salvation..." Grace is God's loving kindness, undeserved favor, free response to man's need. It is manifest so often in God's actions among men that He is called *"the God of all grace,"* I Peter 5:10. Everywhere God's grace is manifest it is related to His redemptive work in the world of men. The greatest need of man is to be saved from his sin; the greatest grace of God is manifest in salvation.

## DECLARED

The saving element in the grace of God is dramatically portrayed in Ephesians 2:1-9. It begins by declaring that God has resurrected us out of spiritual death: we were dead in trespasses and sins. That spiritual death was the result of nature, being the *"children of disobedience"* and the *"children of wrath"* as was everyone else. That spiritual death held its dominion over us because of our actions: *"walking according to the course of this world ... fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind."* That spiritual death remained as a result of our subjection to "the prince of the power of the air." Each person was declared to be a sinner by nature, by action, and by submission. Only grace, undeserved and unmerited favor, could cause God to move with any act of mercy toward us.

Ephesians 2:4-9 reads, *"But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are*

*saved;) and hath raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast."*

What a testimony to the amazing grace of God. Can you imagine God dealing graciously with a vile and wicked sinner? Can you imagine no sin too black, no guilt too grievous, no stain too deep, but what God would move to man not to judge and condemn, but to life and cleanse and save. That is grace. The extent or severity of sin does not stop His grace. *"...The law entered that the offence might abound, But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord,"* Romans 5:20,21.

## **ILLUSTRATED**

Here is how God deals graciously with a sinner. Jesus told how a man went into the temple to pray (Luke 18:10-14). He was guilty of vile and persistent sin. In a culture where it was customary to look upward and lift up the arms when one prayed, he did not so much as lift up his eyes, much less his arms. With downcast eyes he smote himself remorsefully upon his chest and prayed, *"God, be merciful to me a sinner."* God heard that prayer. He saw the repentant spirit and the fact of faith. God responded in grace to that man. Jesus said, "I tell you, this man went down to his house justified" Luke 18:14. That is how God deals graciously with a sinner.

Examples of Jesus' gracious dealings with sinners could be multiplied. A poor fallen woman listened to His teachings in the house of Simon the Pharisee, wept with the sense of her sin, and heard Him say, *"...Thy sins are forgiven ... Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace,"* Luke 7:48, 50. The criminal whose offences against society were so serious that he deserved the judgment of death by crucifixion turned to Jesus to say, *"Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom."* Jesus responded to that malefactor, *"Verily I say unto thee, today shalt thou be with me in paradise,"* Luke 23:42,43. What amazing grace!

Jesus told about a man whose young son received his part of the family estate, wasted it, and returned to the father begging for a position of servant in the household. The father welcomed him without condemnation, embraced him, kissed him, wept with joy over him, and made him a son (not a servant!) in the household once again. Jesus said that is how the Heavenly Father welcomes the sinner who returns in repentance and faith. That is grace.

It was the grace of God which caused Jesus Christ to come into the world. Jesus said, *"The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost,"* Luke 19: 10. His very mission is a mission of grace. He is God's response to man's need. Jesus is God's provision for your personal need, too. He said, *"They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick ... I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance,"* Matthew 9:12,13. The earthly ministry of Jesus was a mission of mercy on behalf of poor lost sinners. That is why the Bible says, *"For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich,"* II Cor. 8:9.

## **PRINCIPLE**

Salvation is by the grace of God and is applied upon the faith of the sinner. The Bible describes that blessed transaction as being *"justified."* A person is accepted before God as if he had never sinned. Someone has suggested that *"justified"* means to be *"just-as-if-I'd"* never sinned. That's it! How can God possibly justify anyone who is unquestionable guilty of sin? The answer is

given in Romans 3. The guilt of all mankind is freely admitted. "*There is none righteous, no, not one none that seeketh after God ... "none that doeth good, no, not one ... all the world guilty before God ... For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God,"* verses 10, 11, 12, 19, 23. Yet, people with such a record are made to share the righteousness of God! How is it possible? The Bible explains, God has set Jesus forth to be propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness and the remission of sins. That is to say, Jesus died in the place of sinners-bearing their guilt of sin-that they might be justified when they accept by faith the benefits of what He has done, The repenting sinner who places faith in Jesus Christ is justified freely by the grace of God through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, Romans 3:24. The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ was God's great act of grace by which He made it possible for guilty sinners to be saved. What amazing grace!

Have you taken advantage of what God has provided for you in Christ Jesus? He has abounded toward you in almost unbelievable acts of grace and mercy and love. Respond to Him in a willingness to receive the benefits of what He has done. Then you can join John Newton in the testimony:

"Amazing grace! How sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me. I once was lost, but now am found; was blind, but now I see."

The grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to you that you might enter into the good of it through faith in Jesus Christ.

### GRACE IS SUFFICIENT

There is no medicine, which is sufficient to care for every sickness. There is no law, which can be applied to every legal need. There is no single answer, which satisfies all questions. But there is one act of grace, which is sufficient to all people and rescues from all sin.

The Bible says, "*The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to ALL MEN,*" Titus 2:11. God's grace was exhibited in the person and work of Jesus Christ as He came in human flesh to remedy human sin by the sacrifice of Himself on the cross. He came in Jewish nationality, but His atonement is not limited to Jewish people. He came in an ancient generation, but His redemption is not limited to that generation. He lived in the land of Palestine, but His ministry is not limited to that land. He came to give Himself a ransom for all people of all nationalities, of all generations, and of all geographical climes. Indeed, "*The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to **all men,***" Titus 2:11. Jesus has given himself "*a ransom for all,*" I Timothy 2:6.

Christian witnesses everywhere testify to the universal availability of the benefit of the grace of God through Jesus Christ. I have preached in fifteen nations of the world. Each message presented the same gospel. Each message announced God's redeeming grace available to the people who hear. Whether the message is communicated through English, Spanish, French, Japanese, Chinese, Italian, or any other language, the truth is the same. We can say to every person everywhere, "God loves you. Jesus died for you and lives again to bestow graciously on you the redeeming benefits of His grace."

The worldwide commission given by the Lord Jesus to His disciples illustrates the universal offer of grace. Jesus commanded, "*Go ye therefore, and teach all nations*" Matthew 28:19. There would be no reason to teach all nations if grace was not available to all. But it is available. Jesus ordered us "*...Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be*

*damned,*" Mark 16:15, 16. That statement enlarges to commission by the addition of a promise: anyone who believes the gospel which is preached will definitely be saved. "*Repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations*" Luke 24:47. That is His great plan. Some of the final words Jesus spoke before His ascension back to the Father in heaven are recorded in Acts 1:8 "*ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.*" The disciples who first heard those words were in Jerusalem, so their witness would start there. As they left Jerusalem, they would have to pass through Judea, so their witness would be given there. To the north of the province of Judea was the district called Samaria, so they would witness there. From that beginning in their hometown, their witness must reach out "*unto the uttermost part of the earth.*" Why go into all the world with the announcement of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ? Let the gospel be preached to all the world, in obedience to the Lord's commission, because the one gospel is equally applicable to all people of all nations and generations. What amazing grace!

Romans chapter five has an elaborate discussion of sin and grace. The first eleven verses speak of the blessings which come upon being justified freely by God as an act of His grace. Verses 12-14 speak of the sin and death which come upon all men as a consequence of Adam's transgression. Verses 15-21 speak of righteousness and life which come through the grace of Jesus Christ. Verses 15 and 16 read, "*But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification.*" There is a clear distinction between the curse of Adam's sin and the blessing of Christ's grace.

Adam's act was in disobedience to God; Jesus' act was in obedience to God. Adam's sin brought death; Jesus' suffering brought life. Adam's offence resulted in condemnation; Jesus' gift is justification. Adam passed judgment to condemnation on to those who are related to him; Jesus passes justification to freedom to those who are related to Him. Sin reigned through Adam even to death; life reigns through Jesus Christ even to the blessing of eternal life. The consequence of Adam's deed has passed on to the whole of humanity; the benefits of Christ's grace is available to the whole of humanity.

What is said to one may be said to all: "Salvation by grace through faith is available to you" Examine that word "grace." Notice it's spelling: **G-R-A-C-E**. Remove the "G" and notice what you have left; R-A-C-E. "Race." The human race! Not one person is excluded. Salvation by grace through faith is available to all who hear and will respond to the Christian gospel. The preaching that the grace of God is available to all is wonderfully heartening. But is that preaching really true? Let's take a look into heaven in answer to that question. Revelation chapter seven records some things seen by the Apostle John as he was given a vision into heaven. Listen to his testimony, "*After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindred's, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb ... These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God*" Revelation 7:9, 10, 15. There they are People of all nations, and kindred's, and races, and languages before the throne of God, having been purified and cleansed in the blood of the Lamb. The preaching is

true. The grace of God, manifest in the suffering and resurrection of Jesus Christ, brings salvation to every person who believes in Jesus.

Now, let me be much more personal in the application of this truth. The grace of God is available to all men, that is true. But that means His grace is available to YOU. Have you benefited from the grace which God has offered to you? You do not need to be worthy. Grace means that God goes beyond our merit in order to meet our needs. You need only be needy, acknowledge that need to Him, and ask for His grace to cover your need. That is the blessed personal application of this truth. The writer of one of our great hymns expressed it in these words: "When sin-sick, and burdened, and weary; from bondage I longed to be free. There came to my heart the sweet message, His grace is sufficient for thee."

Believe the truth of it. Enter into the good of it. "For the grace of God which bringeth salvation hath appeared unto all men"...and that includes you.

### **GRACE IS SANCTIFYING**

*"...The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world," Titus 2:11, 12.*

Grace is God's unmerited favor expressed in His redemptive movement toward sinners. Grace is God's response to man's need.

Some people misunderstand the implications of the doctrine of grace. Because God is gracious to sinners, not imputing their trespasses unto them but reckoning them justified upon the basis of faith, some people look upon grace as a license to sin. The Bible makes the doctrine of grace so clear there is no need for any person to misunderstand it.

Examine Titus 2:11,12 in view of its teachings concerning redeeming grace. (1) Grace is sacred: it is "the grace of GOD." (2) Grace is saving: It is "the grace of God that brings SALVATION." (3) Grace is sanctifying: it teaches us that, "denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world." What a beautiful picture of the amazing grace of our wonderful God,

### **NEGATIVE ASPECTS**

There is a negative aspect to the sanctifying power of divine grace. It teaches us to "*deny ungodliness and worldly lusts,*" Examine that statement.

To "deny" a thing means a rejection of it which is expressed in a definite break with it. It means to renounce, repudiate, and abhor a thing. To deny ungodliness and worldly lust means to separate one's self from all that is contrary to the nature and will of God. It means the believer will have a spirit of abhorrence, an attitude of repudiation, and an act of renunciation of all that may be characterized as "ungodliness" or as "worldly lusts."

What is "ungodliness"? It is anything which leaves God out. It may express itself as irreverence. It may manifest itself by impiety. It includes anything that does not honor God. Be done with it. Deny it. Renounce it. Repudiate it. Abhor it. Anything that is opposed to the character of God or the will of God should not be permitted to dwell in the life of a person who has received the grace of God.

What about "worldly lusts"? Lust is strong desire. It is commonly used to refer to a consuming desire for that which is and should be forbidden. "Worldly lusts" refers to the passion to possess or experience that which is of the world, the evil world system in the midst of which we live.

What is wrong with worldly lusts? First John 2:15-17 replies with these words: *"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever."* God forbids His children to lust after the world. Here is His explicit commandment: *"Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul,"* I Peter 2:11. How does the Christian "deny" all "ungodliness and worldly lusts"? He is to renounce the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but to manifest the truth of God by word and deed (11 Cor. 4:2). Act on that negative injunction and then you are ready to follow the positive.

### **POSITIVE ASPECTS**

*"...We should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world,"* Titus 2:12. The Christian life is not mere self-denial. It is the replacing of the inferior with the superior. It is living on a higher plane than mere life in terms of the flesh. The godly walk, which becomes those who have received the grace of God, bears a three-fold relationship.

(1) Grace teaches the believer to live in right relationship with himself. He is to live "soberly." There is to be no indulging of the flesh just because one is living under grace. The Christian is to keep under his body (keep it under control; subdue it) in all matters (I Cor. 9:27). Prudence is the proper mark of one who has received the grace of God. Some unknown poet wrote, "I have to live with myself, and so ... I want to be fit for myself to know." The Christian whose life is marked by temperance and self-control is living like a person who has shared the grace of God.

(2) Grace teaches the believer to live in right relationship to his peers. He is to live "righteously." That is, he is to live rightly, according to the rules which govern Christian relationships. Selfishness is ruled out. God has been gracious to him; he must be gracious to others. He who is concerned only with himself and what pleases him will surely live contrary to the will of God. That is why the person in grace must "deny ungodliness and worldly lusts." Only then will he be right in his own heart and bear the right relationship with his fellow man.

(3) Grace teaches the believer to live in right relationship to God. He is to live "godly" in the present world. Grace brought him into a redemptive relationship with God. Grace must keep him in an obedient relationship with God.

God deals with the sinner in mercy, when he deserves judgment. God removes sin, renews the heart in a new birth, makes one a new creation, puts God's own Holy Spirit within him, gives him eternal life, makes him an heir of God and joint heir with Jesus Christ, makes God his Father and heaven his home, provides Him with all that is needed for life and godliness, and adds to that a multitude of other blessings too numerous to mention. Then He calls on the person whom He has so graced to live a life in agreement with all that God has done for him. Such a life is marked by *"denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, and living soberly, and righteously, and godly in the present world."*

Two people were expressing the doctrine of the divine preservation of the saints the security of the believer as it is otherwise called. One said, "If I believed that once you were saved you were always saved, I would really live it up Wow! Would I have a time" Such a statement indicates a misunderstanding of the nature of grace. Grace is not a license to sin. It is an opportunity to be

freed from sin. All who live anew in Christ Jesus are admonished. *"Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof ... but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God,"* Rom. 6:11-13. That is the way you can enjoy the sanctifying effects of grace: "...Denying ungodliness and worldly lusts...live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world."

### **GRACE IS SECURING**

*"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in the present world: looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works,"* Titus 2:11-14

Again, we marvel at the grace of God as presented in these verses of Holy Scripture. Understanding the definition of grace to be "God's goodness toward us who deserve His wrath; God going beyond all merit in helping us;" let us list the attributes of His grace expressed in Titus 2:11-14.

(1) God's grace is sacred. We are concerned with "the grace of GOD." sufficient to answer the needs of all men. (4) God's grace is sanctifying. It gives no license to sin, but teaches us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in the present world. (5) God's grace is securing. It makes us uniquely His own by a blessed two-fold ministry: redeeming us from all iniquity, and making us His peculiar people. Amazing grace!

### **REDEEM FROM ALL INIQUITY**

God's first great act of grace in the life of a sinner is the miracle of salvation. The plan of redemption was prepared by the Father, executed by the Son, and applied by the Holy Spirit in the life of the penitent believer. *"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast,"* Eph. 2:8, 9.

He who has experienced God's grace in salvation is secure. Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, gave Himself for us that he might redeem us from ALL iniquity. Bless God, there is no sin too serious to be included in His great deed of redemption. To redeem means to buy out of the slave market so as to set free. That is what Jesus did for us. He paid the purchase price, His own sinless life, that we might be purchased out of slavery and set free from ALL iniquity.

Psalm 32:1-2 reads, *"Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile."* Transgression means rebellion, an open and daring defection from the known will of God. Sin means to miss the mark, to fall short of the standard. Iniquity means crookedness, a warped disposition. Guile means deceit, hypocrisy, and pretension. What a terrible list. Those four types of offense are listed to inform us that God can forgive all sin. The passage declares that transgression can be forgiven; Sin can be covered. Iniquity can be no longer written against one's account. Guile can be removed and no longer exist in the human heart. That is possible because Jesus *"...gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."*

"Would you be free from the burden of sin? There's power in the blood, power in the

blood. Would you o'er evil the victory win? There's wonderful power in the blood!" Please, do not receive the grace of God in vain. It is by God's grace you have heard the gospel. It is by God's grace you have opportunity to believe. It is by God's grace the appeal is made to your heart just now. Do not let it pass without taking advantage of the opportunity to settle the sin problem once for all with God. Jesus has died for you. Salvation is offered to you. The Spirit of God is calling you. Respond in repentance and faith. Do not receive the grace of God in vain.

### **A PECULIAR PEOPLE**

God redeems us from sin that He may claim us saints. Jesus gave Himself for us that he might *"redeem us from all iniquity"* and that He might *"purify unto himself a peculiar people."* Indeed, it is by grace that we can be both redeemed from sin and purified as God's own people.

What does it mean to be *"a peculiar people"*? The term *"peculiar"* does not mean to be odd nor queer. It means to be different; to be identifiable; to be a people marked out as God's own possession.

The Biblical description of God's *"Peculiar"* people is given in Philippians 2:14-16, *"Do. all things without murmurings and disputings: that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; holding forth the word of life..."* What are the marks of God's *"peculiar"* people? (1) They are quiet spirited, no murmurings nor disputings. (2) They are pure and innocent, blameless and harmless. (3) They are the children of God, sons of God. (4) They are honorable in their conduct, without rebuke. (5) They are different in nature from the unregenerate society, shining as lights in the world. (6) They are witnesses to grace, holding forth the word of life. A person is not God's *"peculiar people"* because he dressed in a strange manner, nor follows different customs. A person is one of God's *"peculiar people"* when the Spirit of the living God lives the life of God through his human body.

God's gift of grace is wholly adequate to meet the need of man. God has *"...blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ,"* Eph. 1:3. The Christian may speak of his conversion experience, his initial entrance into grace, as his *"experience of grace."* The truth is, God's grace is much more than an experience. The believer in Jesus Christ lives in a state and condition of grace. Daily grace is sufficient for each daily need. Romans 6:14 describes the state of grace in which the believer lives. ... *"Ye are not under the law,"* it explains, *"but under grace."* You are living under the government of grace as a Christian! Romans 5:2 declares it is by the Lord Jesus Christ that *"...we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God."* The Bible declares we receive grace; we enter into grace; we stand in grace; we rejoice in grace. The Christian life is grace all the way from origin to end. *"Amazing grace! How sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me. I once was lost, but now am found; 'twas blind, but now I see. 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and grace my fears relieved. How precious did that grace appear the hour I first believed. Through many dangers, toils, and snares, I have already come. 'Twas grace that brought me safe thus far, and grace will lead me home."* That is the amazing grace of God. G-R-A-C-E! Great in its revelation; Redeeming in its power; Amazing in its abundance; Continual in its duration; Eternal in its accomplishments ... Amazing grace! *"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen."*

