

The Grace of God

When discussing the grace of God, it appears there are many today who do not understand the concept of grace. So it is my desire in this paper to reflect the doctrine of grace as I understand it. This will especially become useful knowledge to many in Messianic congregations and fellowships who think that they can be under Law and in Grace at the same time. This is a lie from the devil that holds many of our brothers and sisters under this disillusion especially in North America and Canada.

What is Grace?

Grace is God's gift to mankind, you cannot earn it, or manufacture it through good works or by keeping any law, it is the free gift of God and it comes in two parts. First there is Common Grace then we can enter Spiritual Grace. I will now discuss these individually so that the subject is totally understood.

Common Grace

This is seen as God's general care over the world of His making. This is often conveyed in His dealings. Of restraining sin, as the sinful nature of man is never allowed to develop to its full potential wickedness (2Thess 2:7) He is seen to do this in two ways, first He does it through the power and restraint of His Holy Spirit, and secondly He does it through human government, by which He contains lawlessness. (1Peter 2:13-17)

We can also see common Grace in action through public opinion, which also prevents lawlessness from going too far, this is something which was given to man in the Noahic Covenant in Gen 9:15.

If and when this is seen to fail, God then steps in with divine punishment, which is also Common Grace. This can clearly be seen in the incident at Sodom and Gomorrah, as appose to what happened with Jonah at Nineveh where all repented. Common grace also allows us to have rain and sunshine (Math 5:44-45) which in turn brings us food from the earth. Common Grace also enables the unsaved man to do good deeds (Math 19:17).

Common Grace also gives men and women time to repent, which we learn from Romans 2:4 is also the natural rule of civil law and righteousness, which is only there because of common Grace (1Peter 2:13-17).

However even common Grace has its limitations, for it was only made to be effectual at a natural level. Man often resists common Grace, which has been put there for his benefit, and when he ignores the truth he comes into divine judgement (Gen 6:3) The main reason that God does not terminate us all and start again, is because of common Grace, along with His desire to be longsuffering.

In order that we may take a further look at common Grace and understand it, let's look at the language:

There are two Hebrew words and one Greek one that explain things clearly, the first one is '[Chen](#)'

'[Chen](#)' means 'Pure and unmerited favour, from an all powerful God or Creator, who is superior to a fallible being who is inferior'.

Now this informs us of seven things:

- 1) He gives us divine favour (Jeremiah 31:2)
- 2) It emphasizes a royal gift to a poor individual.
- 3) This gift of Grace incorporates longsuffering. (Psalm 116:5)
- 4) Although the giver can be provoked, He is seen to be very merciful. (Exodus 34:7)
- 5) This Grace allows a repentant sinner to lay his sin on a burden bearer.

- 6) This Grace connects us with spiritual redemption.
- 7) This grace also connects us with physical redemption from all our enemies, from wars and sin. (Psalms 4:1, 86:1-13, 123:3)

The Second Hebrew word is 'Chesed'

- 1) It speaks of a deep communion with God. (Psalm 5:6-7)
- 2) It speaks of God's Covenantal relationship to men. (Deut 7:12)
- 3) Its main emphasis is that of Grace through deliverance. (Psalm 6:4)
- 4) Its emphasis is also Grace through enlightenment. (Psalm 119:64)
- 5) It extends forgiveness (Psalm 51:1)
- 6) It speaks of and thus produces hope. (Psalm 130:7)
- 7) It is this Grace that brings forth praise and promises preservation. (Psalm 13:5, 22:11-19)

The Third is a Greek word 'Charis'

- 1) It means to show favour and loving kindness.
- 2) It is used to express thanks, and to show Grace-giving, as well as saving Grace.
- 3) It comes from the same Hebrew root word meaning to bestow Grace upon something Eph 1:6
- 4) It is especially used to show the Grace gifts of salvation and of the Holy Spirit. (Eph 4:5-11)
- 5) It is from this word we obtain the words 'Charismatic' and 'Charity'.

In the light of what all these words mean Biblically, along with their practical outworking we learn two things;

- 1) Under the Law, blessings accompany obedience. (Deut 28:1-6)
- 2) Under New Testament, Grace gives us blessings as a free gift. (Rom 4:3-5, Eph 2:8)

The big question we must now ask is "Is Grace a New Covenant concept only?" The answer is 'NO' and this is why:

In the Patriarchal period Grace was extended to at least 5 special people who were;
[Noah](#) (Gen 6:8) [Abraham](#) (Gen 18:3) [Lot](#) (Gen 19:19) [Jacob](#) (Gen 32:10) [Joseph](#) (Gen 39:21)

Under the Mosaic Law Moses was given Grace in Ex 33:12-17, it was also given to Israel in Ex 15:13 to remain a people, so they could bring forth Messiah, and then eventually it was given to the whole world.

In the gospels the word Grace is used 11 times in Luke, but only a few times in John, then nowhere else.

The Apostle Paul was the greatest teacher of Grace, hence the Greek word 'Charis' is used 14 times in the letter to the Romans. He notes that it is a [free gift](#) that ought not to be resisted.

The correct response to this gift is to have faith in God, who makes all things possible, the kind of faith that pulls our whole attitude into line when we realise only He could have altered our circumstances along with our lifestyle.

It must be noted that even born again Christians can be guilty of some of the most abominable things in the name of Jesus, and yet the freedom given by God in His Grace is never taken away, since we will all have to give account for the things we do in the body. (Rom 14:12, Heb 13:17, Math 12:36) Grace will also take this into consideration and still allow for growth.

Now let us speak of Spiritual Grace.

Spiritual Grace

This gift is only given by God after common Grace has served its purpose of delivering people to the gospel. After that point, it will continue to function unless hindered by our wilfulness, this was the reason that God gave it in the first place.

Spiritual Grace, works as part of the human will, generating that will, without force. Spiritual Grace is first and foremost an act and not a process, and will always conform you to the image of Yeshua (Jesus).

The Believer's Life under Spiritual Grace

In life under Spiritual Grace, it is important to know two things;

- 1) It is important to realise that believers are under Grace and not Law (Rom 6:14). The life that one now lives, are in no way based on the Mosaic Law. Rather the law of Christ Jesus has freed us from the Law of sin and death. Law taught us to do things because it demanded them from us, as that is the only way **to be blessed** under that system. But New Testament Grace teaches us to do things because **WE ARE BLESSED**, this is the difference.
- 2) Believers must realise that they are free from the Mosaic Law and everything to do with it, **but not from Law altogether**, they are now under the law of Christ (1 Cor 9:21, Gal 6:2, John 13:34, Math 22:40)

In conclusion to all that has been said, we can summarise it in 7 points:

- 1) 1) Grace is the totally unmerited favour of God to our lives.
- 2) 2) Grace is not withheld because of sin, if it was it would not be true Grace.
- 3) 3) Grace is not reduced if we sin, as it always allows for growth.
- 4) 4) Grace can not and does not incur a debt, as good works could never compensate.
- 5) 5) God will only deal with your sin on the basis of mercy, not leniency.
- 6) Forgiveness is not an immediate act of Grace, its a judicial pardon in view of sinless death of Christ
- 7) Common Grace and favour is not only the privilege of the saved, it is extended to all men.

Only because believers are sealed in the Holy Spirit, they have the power to live this life under Grace.

This is because a portion of Grace and full pardon is given to every true believer who repents and asks Yeshua (Jesus) into their heart. This has been happening since the birth of the church in Acts 2.

Now as I have already said, many Messianic congregations have Gentiles who believe that because they are grafted into the Jewish root, as we are told in Romans 11:17, this means that they have to try to become Jewish, this could not be further from the truth, especially since for many this means being rabbinic. If it was simply a matter of becoming Jewish then Jesus would not have to have died, a Gentile could already become Jewish under the Noach Laws before Jesus, and they were called Godfearers. But Yeshua did not go to the cross to make us Jewish, He went to the cross to take away our sin so that we would have free access to worship the Father in Spirit and in truth with our Jewish brethren. (Isa 14:1, 25:7-9, 42:1-7, 49:6, 56:3-8, 60:15-16, 61:8-11, Math 12:18, Luke 2:32, Acts 13:47, MaL 1:11)

We do not need to wear Kippurs, blow shofars, or wear Tallits we are accepted as we are, for as Paul informs us [“He is a Jew who is one inwardly”](#) Rom 2:28. Paul also says [“Brethren let each one remain with God in that state in which he was called”](#) 1Cor 7:24. So we have nothing to prove, if we were called as Gentiles we remain Gentiles and we observe the Law of Christ.

We are told that as believers we are to provoke the Jews to jealousy, we do not do that by dressing up like them in some kind of Jewish pantomime every Shabbat. This is tantamount to ridiculing them and that is exactly how they see it. We do this best when we show them the freedom we have in Yeshua from the Law and still worship and retain blessings from God the Father(Rom 8:2, 1Cor 9:1, Gal 4:26, 5:1,).

The Positive Precepts of a Life under Grace

There are a number of positive precepts of a life under Grace in the Law of Christ, these ought to be kept:

Rom 13:1, 1Cor 11:28-30, 2 Cor 6:17, Gal 6:2, Eph 5:22, Phil 4:9, Col 4:6, 1Thess 5:16-22, 2Thess 3:12, 1Tim 2:8, 2Tim 4:2, Titus 2:7, James 1:5, 1Peter 2:21, 2Peter 3:18, 1John 2:6, 2John 5, 3John 11, Jude 22, Rev 2:5