

THE LORD IS GRACIOUS

Tim Smith

The LORD is gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy. The LORD is good to all: and his tender mercies are over all his works (Psa. 145:8-9).

This psalm is entitled “A Psalm of Praise: of David,” indicating both the nature or character of the psalm as well as its author. David penned the words in order that the God of heaven might be glorified and uplifted. In it David extols God’s grace, compassion, goodness, and power. For a few minutes let us examine the first phrase of the text set forth above.

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It is sometimes suggested that there was no grace in the Old Testament, but such is utterly false! Our God has ever of old been a gracious God. Was it not His grace that spared Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, when they were separated from God’s presence but still allowed to live on earth? And what about Noah? Were it not for the grace of God there, we would not be here now! When man was at his lowest point, and the thought of his heart was only evil continually, and the wrath of God was kindled against him, hear Moses: **“But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD”** (Gen. 6:8). We see the grace of God again in His dealings with Moses:

And he hewed two tables of stone like unto the first; and Moses rose up early in the morning, and went up unto mount Sinai, as the LORD had commanded him, and took in his hand the two tables of stone. And the LORD descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD. And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin (Exo. 34:4-7).

God’s grace allowed Moses a second chance at receiving the law when he did not deserve one. David often set forth God’s grace: **“For the LORD God is a sun and shield: the LORD will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly”** (Psa. 84:11). Have we done anything to deserve such protection and provision? Of course, we have not. Hear Solomon: **“Surely he scorneth the scorners: but he giveth grace unto the lowly”** (Pro. 3:34). The grace of God was there in the Old Testament, else there would have been no New Testament.

In New Testament times the grace of God was magnified before men, and indeed personified in the Son of God:

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. ...For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ (John 1:14, 17).

Jesus embodied all that is characteristic of God's grace, being the perfect manifestation of its purpose; i.e., giving men a chance (they do not deserve) at salvation. Paul wrote: **"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men"** (Tit. 2:11). The writer of Hebrews incorporates the willingness of Jesus and the result of His grace into one passage:

But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man (Heb. 2:9).

One of the wonderful things about the grace of God is the willingness of the Father and the Son to extend it: **"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).

Apart from the grace of our God salvation would be out of the question: **"But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved"** (Acts 15:11). Grace and the application of the blood of Christ are connected by inspiration:

To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace (Eph. 1:6-7).

The question is forever settled by the same writer in the same letter:

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. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them (Eph. 2:8-10).

Having sinned (Rom. 3:10, 23), we lost the right to life in heaven (Rom. 6:23). By grace Jesus offers us this opportunity, though we stand undeserving thereof. God had **"before ordained"** that His people should walk in **"good works"** (i.e., obeying the teachings of His Son, Jesus Christ). Men forsook Him and His Son, and now, by grace, Jesus calls us back to those **"good works"** in order that we might live. When we accept His call (through obedience to the gospel) we are responding favorably to a **"gift of God,"** and though we **"work out your [our] own salvation with fear and trembling"** (Phi. 2:12), we still have not earned our salvation, for apart from the gift of God through His Son we would be forever banished to an eternity in Hell.

The grace of God comes with many rewards, including justification (Rom. 3:24), an opportunity to partake of the promise God made to Abraham (Rom. 4:16), access to Christ (Rom. 5:1-2), help in overcoming the devil (Jam. 4:5-7), help in all times of need (Heb. 4:16), and strength to overcome temptations (Rom. 6:1-2).

The grace of God is offered to all men, and indeed it is His desire that all men avail themselves of its benefits (2 Pet. 3:9), but only the obedient will benefit from it:

But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me (1 Cor. 15:10).

God contributed the grace and Paul supplied the obedience, and the two working together saved him.

Great as it is, the grace of God can be (and often is) resisted. Consider: **“We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain”** (2 Cor. 6:1). It can be rendered vain! It can also be frustrated: **“I do not frustrate the grace of God”** (Gal. 2:21). And some have already fallen from grace: **“Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace”** (Gal. 5:4).

“But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (2 Pet. 3:18). **“Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen”** (Gal. 6:18). If you would avail yourself of the benefits of God’s grace, obey the gospel! Hear and believe (Heb. 11:6), repent (Luke 13:3), confess (Acts 8:37), and be baptized properly (1 Pet. 3:21). Then be faithful (Rev. 2:10).~

Deceased