

GOD OF GRACE

June 8,2014

I. Introduction

Where this name is found

1 Pt 5:10 ...the God of all grace ...

While the title "God of all grace" occurs only in 1 Pt 5:10, "grace" is found no less than 150 times in the New Testament. It is indeed a defining term of the Christian faith, for the Father, is the "God of all grace."

Grace is not merely something which God expresses.

It is an expression of what He is.

II. Grace is found in the OT

A. Clear passages

Ps 84:11-12 The Lord gives grace

Ps 84:11-12 For the LORD God is a sun and shield; The LORD gives grace and glory; No good thing does He withhold from those who walk uprightly. O LORD of hosts, How blessed is the man who trusts in You!

Ps 86:5, 15 The Lord is (abundant in) merciful and gracious

Ps 86:5 For You, Lord, are good, and ready to forgive, And abundant in lovingkindness to all who call upon You.

Ps 86:15 But You, O Lord, are a God merciful and gracious, Slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness and truth.

Mic 7:18-19 the Lord forgives sin because He delights in unchanging love.

Who is a God like You, who pardons iniquity And passes over the rebellious act of the remnant of His possession? He does not retain His anger forever, Because He delights in unchanging love. 19 He will again have compassion on us; He will tread our iniquities under foot. Yes, You will cast all their sins Into the depths of the sea.

B. People in the Old Testament who found grace

Ro 3:21-26 grace/faith righteousness of God was witness in the OT

Ro 3:21-23 But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets. 22 even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction; 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

1. Noah

Gen 6:8 But Noah found favor (grace) in the eyes of the LORD.

Heb 11:7 By faith Noah, being warned by God about things not yet seen, in reverence prepared an ark for the salvation of his household, by which he condemned the world, and became an heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.

2. Abraham

Gen 15:6 Then he believed in the LORD; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness .

Ro 4:13 For the promise to Abraham or to his descendants that he would be heir of the world was not through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith.

Ro 4:2-5 For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. 3 For what does the Scripture say? "ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS ." 4 Now to the one who works, his wage is not credited as a favor, but as what is due. 5 But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness ,

3. Lot

Ge 19:17-22 grace enables Lot and his family to escape to Zoar, instead of the mountains.
17 When they had brought them outside, one said, " Escape for your life! Do not look behind you, and do not stay anywhere in the valley; escape to the mountains, or you will be swept away." 18 But Lot said to them, "Oh no, my lords! 19 "Now behold, your servant has found favor in your sight, and you have magnified your lovingkindness, which you have shown me by saving my life; but I cannot escape to the mountains, for the disaster will overtake me and I will die; 20 now behold, this town is near enough to flee to, and it is small. Please, let me escape there (is it not small?) that my life may be saved." 21 He said to him, "Behold, I grant you this request also, not to overthrow the town of which you have spoken. 22 "Hurry, escape there, for I cannot do anything until you arrive there." Therefore the name of the town was called Zoar.

4. Job

Job 1:1 Job was a blameless (righteous) and upright man
There was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job; and that man was blameless, upright, fearing God and turning away from evil.

5. Moses

Ex 33:12-20 the presence of God goes with Moses (and Israel) because of grace (God's favor)
12 Then Moses said to the LORD, "See, You say to me, ' Bring up this people!' But You Yourself have not let me know whom You will send with me. Moreover, You have said, 'I have known you by name, and you have also found favor in My sight.' 13 "Now therefore, I pray You, if I have found favor in Your sight, let me know Your ways that I may know You, so that I may find favor in Your sight. Consider too, that this nation is Your people." 14 And He said, " My presence shall go with you, and I will give you rest." 15 Then he said to Him, " If Your presence does not go with us, do not lead us up from here. 16 "For how then can it be known that I have found favor in Your sight, I and Your people? Is it not by Your going with us, so that we, I and Your people, may be distinguished from all the other people who are upon the face of the earth?" 17 The LORD said to Moses, "I will also do this thing of which you have spoken; for you have found favor in My sight and I have known you by name." 18 Then Moses said, "I pray You, show me Your glory!" 19 And He said, " I Myself will make all My goodness pass before you, and will proclaim the name of the LORD before you; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show compassion on whom I will show compassion." 20 But He said, "You cannot see My face, for no man can see Me and live!"

Ex 34:6-9 God gives Moses a second copy of the 10 Commandments and declares
6 Then the LORD passed by in front of him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth; 7 who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin; yet He will by no means leave the guilty unpunished, visiting the iniquity of fathers on the children and on the grandchildren to the third and fourth generations." 8 Moses made haste to bow low toward the earth and worship. 9 He said, " If now I have found favor in Your sight, O Lord, I pray, let the Lord go along in our midst, even though the people are so obstinate, and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us as Your own possession."

6. David

Ro 4:6-8 just as David also speaks of the blessing on the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works: 7 "BLESSED ARE THOSE WHOSE LAWLESS DEEDS HAVE BEEN FORGIVEN, AND WHOSE SINS HAVE BEEN COVERED. 8 "BLESSED IS THE MAN WHOSE SIN THE LORD WILL NOT TAKE INTO ACCOUNT."

B. The Hebrew (OT) word hesed; is equivalent to the Greek (NT) word for "grace," charis;

1. Grace is God's character, nature or personality; He is gracious

(Ex 22:27; 2 Ki 13:23; 1 Chr 21:13; 2 Chr 30:9; Psa 116:5; 145:17; Pro 3:34)

2. The Psalmists prayed for grace

(Psa 6:2; 9:13; 25:16; 26:11; 27:7; 30:10; 31:19; 41:4, 10; 51:1; 56:1; 57:1; 77:9; 86:3, 16; 90:17; 119:58, 132; 123:3)

3. It was spoken as a blessing "May God be gracious to you."

(Gen 43:29; Psa 67:1)

III. Final thoughts

A. Summary passage on the concept of grace

Eph 2:1-10 most clearly summarizes the basic realities expressed in the biblical concept of grace:

And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, 2 in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. 3 Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. 4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; 9 not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. 10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

1. In this passage Paul portrays human beings as

utterly lost,
spiritually dead,
and under divine wrath.

2. In this deplorable condition,

human thoughts and actions express the sin that has corrupted our very nature so that we are utterly without hope.

But God loves us despite our sinfulness, and God acted in Christ to make us spiritually alive.

God not only gave us new spiritual life, but also
He lifted us up in Christ,
raising us from the depths of condemnation to heaven itself.

Throughout eternity what God has done for us in Jesus will display the riches of His grace so that the entire universe might stand in awe.

B. Comparing religion to grace

1. Relationship with God

Human religions approach being in relationship with God from a common point of view. They assume that people are able to please God by their actions and that being in a relationship with God depends to some extent on what a person does.

This makes salvation a reward, namely, something a person merits or deserves.

Christianity approaches being in a relationship with God in a totally different way. People are viewed as spiritually lost, that is, as being dead in trespasses and sins (Eph. 2:1).

They are unable to please God because sin is woven into the fabric of their being.

It is only by God's free and spontaneous action in Jesus that salvation comes.

Even the righteousness that increasingly marks the Christian's experience is a result of God's action in us, not mere human effort.

2. The focus and result

Religion
focuses on self,
relies on works of the Law,
and results in condemnation.

In contrast, Christianity
focuses on the Messiah,
relies on His saving work for us,
and results in new life and personal righteousness.

All of this is summed up in the New Testament concept of grace.

C. Grace description

The dictionary defines grace as the unmerited favor of God towards men. This does not do justice to the richness of the biblical use of the term, which appears approximately 150 times in the New Testament, with a wide range of meanings.

The Bible describes grace as:

1. Great (Ac 4:33)
2. Rich (Eph 1:7; 2:7)
3. Surpassing (2Co 9:1)
4. Manifold (1Pe 4:10)
5. Glorious (Eph 1:6, 14)
6. Abundant (Rom 5:17, 20)
7. Greater than the power of sin and death (Rom 5:15; 21)
8. Sufficient and abundant in our weaknesses (2Co 12:9)
9. Makes you strong (Ac 20:32)

D. Quotes

1. A. W. Pink has written:

“Grace is a provision for men who are so fallen that they cannot help themselves, so corrupt that they cannot change their natures, so averse to God that they cannot turn to Him, so blind they cannot see Him, so deaf they cannot hear Him, so dead that He Himself must open their graves and lift them into resurrection.”

2. Fred Smith; In his book, *Leading with Integrity* Fred Smith says this about grace.

Grace was genuine, real, personal, and palpable to the great saints (in church history). Grace was a practical part of their everyday life. For example, Brother Lawrence (He wrote, *Practicing the Presence of God*) said that when he made a mistake he didn't spend any time thinking about it; he just confessed it and moved on. He reminded God that without him, to fall (fail, sin) is natural. Before I read that, I lingered over guilt. Immediate grace was too good to be true. Brother Lawrence's experience greatly released me.

Nevertheless, legalism appeals to our common sense. I find it necessary to remind myself that the very Scripture that makes me know my guilt lets me know God's grace. By refusing grace, we play God and punish ourselves.

We view events as punishment. We see discipline coming when in reality it isn't discipline, it's just a consequence, but we try to read into it God's judgment. Why? Because we feel we deserve judgment rather than grace.

Grace brings freedom. If only we could accept grace fully, then we, like Brother Lawrence, could have the freedom to admit failure and move on. Since grace cannot be deserved, why should I feel others are more worthy of it than I?

The following references were used in this study:

Every name of God in the Bible
The Great Doctrines of the Bible
Leading with Integrity
Thayer's Greek Lexicon
Foundations of Pentecostal Theology
Englishman's Concordance
Vines Expository Dictionary of Old Testament Words
Interlinear Bible – Old Testament
Brown – Driver – Briggs Hebrew Lexicon (Definitions)
Strong's Greek/Hebrew Definitions