

- Grace -

"So that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Romans 5:21)



The Berean Lamp
For the Body of Christ.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Laws of Grace?

by Nathan Warner - Page 4

The Believer's Position in Christ

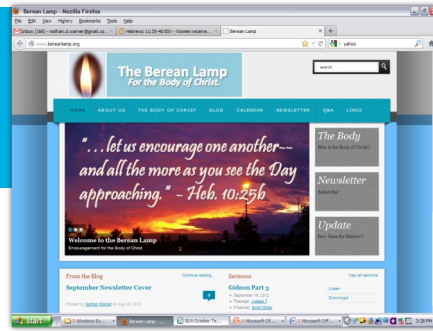
by Jesse Larsen - Page 6

By Grace I'm Saved

by Maggie Moller - Page 12

The Power of Grace

by Lynn Warner - Page 15



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The Berean Lamp Ministry seeks to:

1. Encourage and strengthen the Body of Christ by providing the means for each of its members to share their spiritual gifts with one another, rooted in the Word of God, thereby growing into deeper union with one another and with Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12-31).
2. Minister to non-believers; be a witness for Christ and a testimony to His Body in the world.

We would appreciate your help in contributing to the content and in spreading the work of this ministry. Thank you, and God bless.

- Pastor Scott Moller

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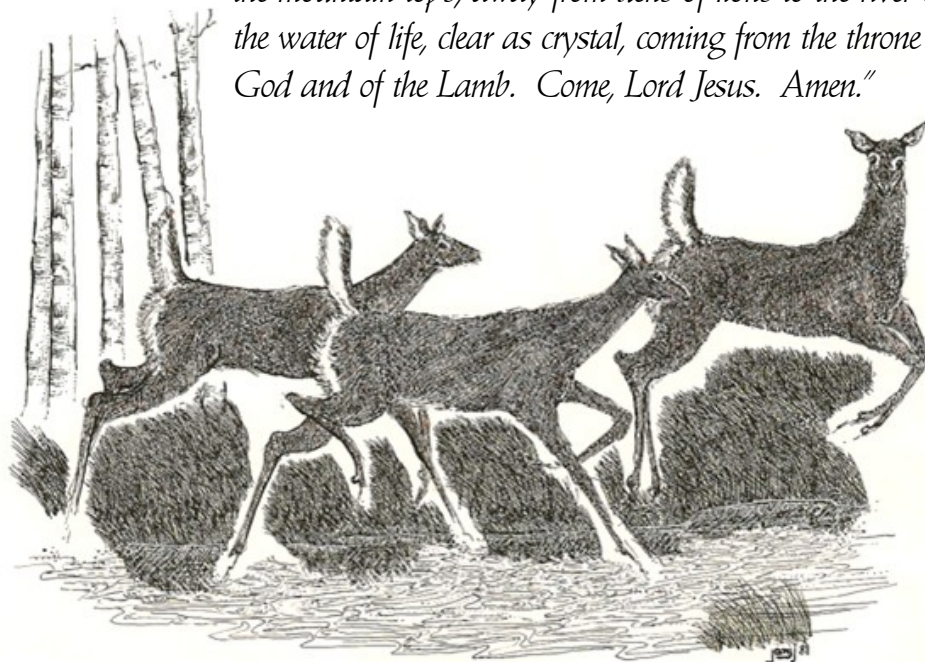


Like a Gazelle

The firs and birches tower alongside our narrow, winding road, and sometimes I am taken by surprise, as this fall when I rounded a bend and was suddenly confronted by three graceful deer who decided to cross the path in front of us, meandering with delicate steps from one side of the road to the other, pausing occasionally to gaze at us with curious eyes, then flicking their white tails and disappearing into the forest.

Like these deer, Christ will come unexpectedly—swiftly, in the twinkling of the eye. He will come like a gazelle, leaping upon the mountains to we who are waiting in the valley below, thirsting for Him. As the deer longs for water brooks, so we long for God, asking, "When shall I appear before the living God?"

The bride cries out, "Turn, my Beloved, and be like a gazelle or a young hart upon the mountains. Draw me after you and let us run together, passing over the mountain tops, away from dens of lions to the river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb. Come, Lord Jesus. Amen."



Laws of Grace?

By Nathan Warner

*“Now the law came in to increase the trespass,
but where sin increased, **grace** abounded all
the more.”*

(Romans 5:20)

We are all under laws or standards of some sort or other. When we think of “law,” we have a tendency to think of religious commandments, like those from Leviticus. Most Christians would say they live solely under grace and are not under any form of law, but law is any standard that measures us – anything we measure ourselves by and find some form of comfort in conforming to. After all, we like to know where we stand, don’t we?

Sometimes we find ourselves lacking according to the measurement, while other times we feel secure in full measure. We must understand that anything we endeavor to do and accomplish in ourselves is a law that we hold ourselves to. We judge ourselves “good” or “bad” by how well we keep these laws.

For example, a law in my life when I was younger was that I would never drink alcohol or even be seen near a liquor store. I also would never be seen in the company of known sinners or in a place where it might be assumed I was sinning. I put a great deal of stock in how things were perceived and what people might think. In the process of measuring myself against these “laws,” I felt more secure in my “standing” when I successfully avoided these things. I felt pretty good about myself if I saw everyone else doing the things I felt were wrong, but I wasn’t doing them.

The problem is these laws assert a form of “righteousness” in our lives if we follow them. If we succeed in any of our laws, we have accomplished something in ourselves. The result is we are lulled into a false sense of security – a security outside of grace, and here the Devil springs on us.

An excellent example of how these “laws” lead us into dangerous territory are the vows

King David makes in Psalm 101. Here, he forged standards of righteousness for himself that he judged himself successful by:

“I will sing of steadfast love and justice;
to you, O LORD, I will make music.
I will ponder the way that is blameless.

Oh when will you come to me?

I will walk with integrity of heart
within my house;

I will not set before my eyes
anything that is worthless.

I hate the work of those who fall away;
it shall not cling to me.

A perverse heart shall be far from me;
I will know nothing of evil.

Whoever slanders his neighbor secretly
I will destroy.

Whoever has a haughty look and an arrogant
heart

I will not endure.

I will look with favor on the faithful in the
land,

that they may dwell with me;

he who walks in the way that is blameless
shall minister to me.

No one who practices deceit
shall dwell in my house;

no one who utters lies

shall continue before my eyes.

Morning by morning I will destroy
all the wicked in the land,
cutting off all the evildoers
from the city of the LORD.”

What a testament this Psalm is against our ability to keep ourselves righteous. Perhaps David was lulled into a false sense of security after he became king. It was likely shortly after writing this psalm that David fell into adultery, deception, and murder – all things he swore he’d never allow in his kingdom, to say nothing about doing himself. It is a warning to us that any comfort we get out of following standards for our direction may misguide us into dangerous self-righteousness. This psalm should be a stop sign against holding ourselves, measuring ourselves, and judging our-

selves by standards instead of the grace of the Lord.

This is not to say that we cannot notice a failing in our lives or in someone else's life and seek to correct it. The danger is when we do so in ourselves and not in Christ. We must only measure ourselves by Jesus Christ, because we will ALWAYS be wanting and without righteousness in comparison with Him – always in need of infinite Grace, because there is no way we can ever make ourselves like Jesus. This is the way it MUST be. We can do nothing but accept God's gift of Grace to make us like His Son.

When struggling with law in our lives, it helps to reflect on Jesus' life. He didn't live His life by any self-righteous laws, but the people around Him sure did. Take for example my self-imposed law that I wouldn't be seen in a bar. Jesus ate with publicans and sinners, until the Jews said, "*Look at Him! A glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!*" (Luke 7:34b). What Christian would live his life so such a thing could be said about him by the people he was trying to bring to salvation? Very few, I imagine. Yet this is what Jesus did, for He said, "*The Son of Man has come eating and drinking*" (Luke 7:34a). This is not to say that Jesus was a glutton or a drunkard. Most certainly He was not, but He visited the places associated with sin and revelry, because these were the people that needed the Gospel most. How uncomfortable this must have made His disciples! How uncomfortable it might make many a Christian! Especially those like me who have lived "secure" in self-imposed law by standards of righteousness.

Another law I had in my life was that I most certainly wouldn't be seen in situations that might be construed as taking advantage of a woman or that might raise suspicions about my intentions. If I kept myself from these situations then I would have a tendency to count myself honorable and free from any shame.

How interesting it is that Jesus did not care what people thought, even on this issue. Take for example the fact that he allowed women disciples to follow him. Any review of Jewish

customs during the time shows this was scandalous behavior for a Rabbi. It was also a serious offense to speak to a woman in public who was not a relative; yet, Jesus takes the opportunity to talk with the woman at the well – a very awkward and compromising situation as we see his disciples react: "*Just then his disciples came back. They marveled that he was talking with a woman, but no one said, 'What do you seek?' or, 'Why are you talking with her?'*" (John 4:27). Jesus did not explain Himself to them. He did not say, "Oh, hey, everybody...uh, this woman was just getting Me some water, that's all." He didn't even try to clarify it for gossip's sake, though He knew what each of them was thinking.

Why did Jesus not care what other people thought? Why wasn't He living His life by laws and standards to avoid gossip and misunderstandings? The answer is because He only cared what His Heavenly Father thought. He understood that nothing anyone thought mattered in eternity – only what God thinks matters. Jesus would perform His Father's will regardless of what people might insinuate, suspect, murmur, or mock. The damage to reputation from gossip or slander did not matter to Him, because He knew His Heavenly Father would honor Him regardless of what men thought or said.

May we also live our lives so focused on Jesus as our infinite measuring stick that the possible slanders to our reputations do not matter. May we accept the complete and pure grace of God in our lives as the only honor we need and the only standard that matters, "*so that, as sin reigned in death, **grace** also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord*" (Romans 5:21).



*"In **HIM** we have redemption through **HIS** blood, the **FORGIVENESS** of our **TRESPASSES**, according to the riches of His **GRACE**."
(Ephesians 1:7)*



The Believer's Position in Christ

By Jesse Larsen

The following are some verses that I have gathered together, as well as some of my own comments, which all pertain to the Believer's position in Christ. There is a great need to reckon this position if we truly want God to be glorified in our lives. If we do not have this position, and if we do not reckon this position, it may result in legalism, and we may only turn others away from Christ. I encourage people to take the time to carefully ponder these verses, and I hope they will be a blessing to you.

Created In Christ Jesus Unto Good Works

"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit." (Titus 3:5)

*"It is God who works in you both **to will** and **to do** for His good pleasure." (Philippians 2:13; emphasis mine)*

"And you hath He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. 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 shew 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. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." (Ephesians 2:1-10)

Note: If we truly are "created in Christ Jesus unto good works," as Ephesians 2:10 clearly states, then we cannot get saved or even keep our salvation by doing good works; rather, our good works will be the *result* of being "created in Christ Jesus." So the one who truly does have his faith in Christ will have good works, not in order to keep himself saved but as the result of his salvation. "We love Him because He first loved us" (1 John 4:19), and that is why we obey His commandments, which "are not burdensome" (1 John 5:3).

This gratitude for Him gives us a much higher motive to obey Him rather than trying to obey Him out of fear that we

might lose our salvation. This gratitude also takes the focus off of ourselves and our performance, as we are "looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith" (Hebrews 12:2).

The New Man

"If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things have passed away; behold, all things are become new." (2 Corinthians 5:17)

"For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." (2 Corinthians 5:21)

"When one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we



By Patty Buswell

all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.” (2 Corinthians 3:16-18)

“For I through the law died to the law that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness

By Maggie Moller



*“For all **MEN** are like grass, and all their glory is like the **FLOWERS** of the field; the grass **WITHERS** and the flowers fall, by the **WORD** of the Lord stands **FOREVER**.”*
(1 Peter 1:24-25a)

comes through the law, then Christ died in vain.” (Galatians 2:19-21)

“For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ.” (Colossians 3:3)

Victory Over Sin

*“For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. For he who has died has been freed from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him. For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. Likewise you also, **reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord**. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. For sin **shall not** have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.” (Romans 6:5-14)*

*“Whoever is born of God does not [practice] sin, **for His seed remains in him**; and he cannot sin because he has been born of God.” (1 John 3:9)*

“We know that whoever is born of God does not [practice] sin; but he who has been born of God keeps himself, and the wicked one does not touch him.” (1 John 5:18)

“Everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.” (1 John 3:3)

“There is therefore now no condemnation to

those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God. But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you." (Romans 8:1-11)

Present Possession of Eternal Life

Note: Many of the following verses clearly indicate that the Believer already has present possession of eternal life. Simple logic tells us that this could not be called eternal life if we had it today and lost it later – that would not be eternal life at all -- it would be **temporal** life.

"He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him." (John 3:36)

"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into

life." (John 5:24)

"All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out." (John 6:37)

"This is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise Him up on the last day." (John 6:40)

"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one [including Satan - See 1 John 5:18] is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand." (John 10:27-29)

"You have given Him [Jesus] authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him. And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent." (John 17:2-3)

"These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know [that's present knowledge] that you have [that's present possession] eternal life." (1 John 5:13)

"He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ." (Philippians 1:6)

Victory Over the World

"You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world." (1 John 4:4)

"For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world - our faith. Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?" (1 John 5:4-5)

"As it is written: For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 8:36-39)

Redeemed by the Finished Work of Christ

"With His own blood He entered the most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" (Hebrews 9:12-14)

"Not that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood of another: He then would have to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself...so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many." (Hebrews 9:26, 28)

NOTE: The rest of this article is Hebrews 10:1-18, with some of my own comments on verse 14:

"For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? For the worshipers, once purified, would have had no more consciousness of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins. There-

*fore, when He came into the world, He said: "Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, But a body You have prepared for Me. In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You had no pleasure. Then I said, 'Behold, I have come - In the volume of the book it is written of Me - To do Your will, O God.' Previously saying, 'Sacrifice and offering, burnt offerings, and offerings for sin You did not desire, nor had pleasure in them' (which are offered according to the law), then He said, 'Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God.' He takes away the first that He may establish the second. By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God, from that time waiting till His enemies are made His footstool. For by one offering **He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.**"*

Note: Obviously, someone who has been "perfected forever" (Hebrews 10:14) cannot be unperfected, which means that we cannot lose our salvation. This is why 1 John 3:9 says that God's seed **remains** in those who have been born of God. Anything born of corruptible seed can perish, but those who have been born of the **incorruptible seed**, mentioned in 1 Peter 1:23, "**shall never perish**" (John 10:28)! Those who teach that we can lose our salvation simply do not understand the **new covenant** that came through Jesus' sacrifice on the cross. But sadly, there are people on **both sides** of the argument who do not understand this.

"But the Holy Spirit also witnesses to us; for after He had said before, 'This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them,' then He adds, 'Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more'. Now where there is remission of these, there is no longer an offering for sin." (Hebrews 10:1-18)



By Nathan Warner



*"And GOD is able to make
all GRACE abound to you,
so that HAVING all suffi-
ciency in all things at all
times, you may
ABOUND in every
GOOD work."
(2 Corinthians 9:8)*

Sing A New Song

Words by Christian L. Scheidt

Music by Justin H. Knecht

*"By grace I'm saved, grace
free and boundless"*



By Grace I'm Saved

Words: Christian L. Scheidt, 1742. Translated by Matthias Loy, (1828-1915)
Music: "O Dass Ich Tausend Zungen" Johann Balthasar König, 1738
Setting: "The Evangelical Lutheran Hymnal" (Ohio Synod), 1908
copyright: public domain. This score is a part of the Open Hymnal Project, 2007 Revision.

♩ = 120

By grace I'm saved, grace free and boundless! My heart, be-liev'st thou this or not?
 grace! our works are all re-ject-ed, All claims of me-rit pass for naught;
 grace! mark well this phra-se's mean-ing, When sin rolls sor-rows o'er thy breast,
 grace! His Son, on earth ap-pear-ing, Vouch-safed be-neath thy woe to bend;
 grace! this ground of our sal-va-tion As long as God is true en-dures;

lest thou with ter-ror ground-less? Has ev-er God a false-hood taught?
 y Sa-vior, long ex-pec-ted, To us this bliss-ful truth has brought;
 tan threats with pride o'er-ween-ing, When troub-led con-science sighs for rest;
 dam-na-tion just-ly fear-ing, Done aught to ren-der Him thy friend?
 have penned by in-spi-ra-tion, What God to our poor soul se-cures,

His Word is true-then this must be: By grace there is a crown for thee,
 That He by death re-deems our race, And we are saved a-lone by grace,
 What rea-son ne'er can com-pre-hend It pleas-es God by grace to send,
 Was't not that He thy wel-fare sought, And but by grace de-liv'r-ance wrought?
 What all our faith must rest u-pon, Is grace, free grace through His dear Son.

By Grace I'm Saved

By Maggie Moller

*"Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be
self-controlled; set your hope fully on the
grace to be given to you when Jesus Christ is
revealed."*

(1 Peter 1:13)

*"For it is by grace you have been saved,
through faith – and this not from yourselves, it
is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one
can boast."*

(Ephesians 2:8-9)

Grace. What does this word mean to you? As I try to think of what "grace" means to me, I am overwhelmed with the vastness of all its aspects. It is a very broad topic, with many sides and applications; but at the root of it all is something very simple. John 3:16 says, "For

God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life." This message is so simple even very young children can easily grasp its meaning. We sinned and were condemned to eternal separation from God. But He loved us so much despite our wickedness that He provided a way for us to be redeemed so we might spend eternity with Him. The substitution for our sins was the sacrifice of His only Son.

I think we often are guilty of trying to complicate the message of grace, thinking that simplifying it will take away its power. But the simple message of John 3:16 is one of the most powerful sentences that has ever been written. It has been the means of bringing many to the Lord and His grace. I can't put into words what I feel when I hear the word "grace." I'm sure most of us would have a hard time describing the feelings the word brings out in our

hearts. I feel a strange mixture of excitement and joy for freedom from my past but also sorrow and heaviness at what the price was for my freedom.

When I think of grace, I see Jesus hanging on the cross with the weight of my ugly, dark sin on His shoulders. But then in glorious light, when He has risen and conquered the grave, He comes to me and picks me up out of the pit of hell and holds me close. He whispers in my ear, "I will never let you go. I have redeemed you. You are mine." Oh, the feeling knowing that the Creator of the Universe loves me so much that He suffered a horrible, painful death and that the Holy Lord of Lords took my sin upon Himself because He wanted to reconcile me to God! Sinful, wicked, worthless ME! I can't make the type or words express my feelings! For me this is grace!!!!

I chose this hymn by request by my mom who first heard it at her friend Sally's funeral after she lost her earthly battle to cancer. Although we will miss her here on earth, her eternal battle has been won by the grace of Christ!

By Grace I'm Saved

By grace I'm saved, grace free and boundless;

My soul, believe and doubt it not;
Why stagger at this word of promise?
Hath Scripture ever falsehood taught?
Nay; then this word must true remain:
By grace thou, too, shalt Heav'n obtain.

By grace! None dare lay claim to merit;
Our works and conduct have no worth,
God in His love sent our Redeemer,
Christ Jesus, to this sinful earth;
His death did for our sins atone,
And we are saved by grace alone.

By grace! O, mark this word of promise
When thou art by thy sins oppressed,
When Satan plagues thy troubled conscience,
And when thy heart is seeking rest.
What reason cannot comprehend
God by His grace to thee doth send.

By grace! This ground of faith is certain;
So long as God is true, it stands.
What saints have penned by inspiration,
What in His Word our God commands,
What our whole faith must rest upon,
Is grace alone, grace in His Son.

The Lyricist - Christian L. Scheidt

Christian Scheidt was born in 1709. Very little is known about his life other than he penned the words to this hymn. He very likely lived in Germany, since the lyrics were originally written in German. He passed away in 1761 at the age of 52.

The Composer - Justin H. Knecht

Justin Knecht was born September 30, 1752, in Germany. Growing up, he learned to play the organ, keyboard, and violin. In addition to his instruments, he also learned to sing. After finishing school, he took a position as a music director and led a very active musical life through compositions for the church and the theater. He also taught music theory, composition, and instrument lessons. He passed away at the age of 65 on December 1, 1817, in Germany.

While little is known about the lives of these two Christian men, we do know that they understood and accepted the gift of grace. This is the most important decision anyone can ever make in their lifetime. It is not a decision to be pushed aside until tomorrow. Tomorrow may never come. Please don't delay if you have yet to receive the wonderful grace of Jesus Christ. He is waiting to give it to you; all you have to do is ask.

Works Consulted:

Hymnary.org
Cyber Hymnal
Wikipedia
NIV Bible

*"For from His fullness we
have all received, grace
upon grace."
(John 1:16)*



By Natalie Madsen



*"For you know the grace
of our Lord Jesus Christ,
that though He was rich,
yet for your sake He be-
came poor, so that you by
His poverty might become
rich."
(2 Corinthians 8:9)*



The Power of Grace

By Lynn Warner

The word “grace” means several things in the New Testament, such as “unmerited favor,” as we read in Ephesians 1:5-6: *“He destined us in love to be His sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of His will, to the praise of His glorious grace which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.”* (RSV) However, it also describes the power of God, as we read in John 1:12: *“But to all who received Him, who believed in His name, He gave power to become children of God.”*

The power to become Children of God is nothing less than the power to create a new thing – a new creation that is alive to God. We are new creatures in Christ, born and sustained by His grace in fullness: *“And from his fullness have we all received, grace upon grace”* (John 1:16). This new creation believes in the name of God’s Son, Jesus, which means “salvation,” and we are saved from our sins. This new creation is given fellowship with God, as revealed in Jesus as “Immanuel,” which means “God with us.” What power to have God with us!

When Paul prays for the saints in Ephesus, he prays that we might know *“the immeasurable greatness of His power in us who believe, according to the working of his great might”* (Ephesians 1:19). He also prays that we would be *“strengthened with might through his Spirit in the inner man”* (Ephesians 3:16b). Christ then dwells in our hearts, and here, we are rooted and grounded in His love. God’s amazing grace not only saves us from our sins, but because we are now forgiven, we are actually given power to become the Children of God, and as children, we enjoy His presence and love. For the first time in our lives, we are enabled to believe and receive TRUE love. Those who do not believe are excluded from the Lord’s grace, His presence, and the power of His might, as we read in 2 Thessalonians 1:9: *“They shall suffer the punishment of eternal*

destruction and exclusion from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might.”

How can the words on this page convey the power of His grace? They cannot, but I have found that taking some time to write thanks for the grace and power of God helps me see His spiritual gifts of grace as He helps me grow in them. It reminds me of the mighty power He has displayed in my life. Another good exercise is to write where we feel we are presently weak in a grace. It has helped me by bringing the conviction of the Holy Spirit into my life that I cram with distractions. Have we strapped on the Helmet of Salvation this morning? Do we feel the weight of the Shield of Faith on our arm? Is the Girdle of Truth, the Gospel of Peace (acceptance and fellowship with God), secured tightly around our waist? Is the Breastplate of Righteousness covering us? Do we grip the Sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, ever-ready in our hand?

Let us always remember what Paul heard Jesus tell him: *“My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness”* (2 Corinthians 12:9a).

“Stone Age” Definitions From the B.C. (Before Computer) Generation

By Jane Titrud



Network - job that requires you to wear a hairnet

Websites - places where spiders hang out

Cross-reference - referring to Christ’s work on the cross

Line Spacing - uniform distance between sparrows on a power line

Daily Backup Routine - backing out the driveway every morning

*"For by GRACE you have been SAVED through FAITH.
And this is not your own DOING; it is the GIFT of God."
(Ephesians 2:8)*



By Nathan Warner



Sept/Oct Newsletter Theme—Persecution**Submission Deadline: September 22****Publish Date: September 29**

Theme: Christian persecution is no longer limited to the Romans and the plight of the early Christian Church. It is increasingly becoming more prevalent in the world today. In fact, the closer the day of the Lord's returning draws, the more vicious and violent the world becomes, moving ever closer to resembling the "days of Noah," and many of its dark acts are targeted toward snuffing out the lights of the Christian Believers. It can be as subtle as the educational system denying prayer in schools, or it can be as loudly proclaimed as people physically attacking and screaming at open-air preachers. Persecution can discourage the Body of Believers, but we are reminded in Scripture to consider it all joy when these trials come....

Submission Ideas

Write a brief historical biography about a Believer who endured persecution in his/her life

Write a personal testimony if you have experienced persecution because of your faith in Jesus Christ and how He worked through it

Write about the "days of Noah." How does the violence in Genesis resemble today's culture?

Write about the presence of persecution against Christians in the world today

Write about the promises of the Lord to protect His children

Write a brief Bible study on various verses in the Bible on this topic

Do a study on 1 Thessalonians 5. What should we be doing as this world grows darker and as we wait on the Lord?

Do a study on the commandments God gives His children, such as considering all trials as joy

Describe a Scriptural passage that pops into your mind when you think about persecution and write about how can we apply it to our lives today

Take pictures of God's marvelous handiwork in creation – try to catch perching birds, raindrops on flower petals, or the marching ants.

Sketch and/or paint a picture of God's creation

Illustrate a promise of the Lord through an object lesson.

Write a free-verse poem without any form or rhyme. Pray for the Lord to give you words.

Write a poem of praise to our King

Further Out—November: Mercy