

Have You Seen What We've Seen? (Observation 12)

Dear Friends in Christ Jesus our Lord,

In this Teaching Email we'll present an understanding of one particular aspect of our Father's grace which He pours out lavishly on His children. It's a grace that's *absolutely necessary* for you to carry out His purposes on your pilgrimage to your salvation. Throughout Scripture His varied manifestations of grace are like a diamond with many sparkling facets. Here we'll focus on one of the more crucial facets of our **Father's grace — that which promotes His purposes in and through His children.**

You may not have heard about this vital facet of His grace. Several historical influences eradicated this essential understanding of grace of providing a follower of Jesus with the resolute desire and power to fulfill our Father's purposes. Ignorance of this function of Father's grace to **promote purpose** in the life of Christians has produced self-serving, spiritually anemic churchgoers who lack resolute determination to obey. So a passive spectator Christianity rolls on without the Holy Spirit's giftings being used for our Lord's glory and without reliance on the Holy Spirit's presence at all.

Who stamped out the missing facet of God's Grace?

From its beginning, Roman Catholicism was plagued by fierce anti-Semitism. Centuries later many of the Protestant Reformers were gripped by the poison of anti-Semitism as well. From the second century onward the Gentile religious leadership determined to make a decisive split from any practices they considered to be “Jewish” or “Old Testament”. A number of the Reformers restored some of the Hebraic foundations that had been lost during Rome's domination of Christianity, such as *sola fides* — by faith alone; *sola scriptura* — by the Bible alone; *sola gratia* — by grace alone. But when it came to understanding our Father's view of grace and its very real demonstration in *both* Testaments, most Reformers excluded the Hebraic understanding of grace in its *intended response* within its recipients.

God's grace as interpreted through the Greek word *charis* is often termed “God's unmerited favor.” A theological definition would include “divine assistance to bring about regeneration (rebirth) or sanctification (being made holy); or a virtue from God to produce a sanctified state”. While both of these descriptions are essentially true, they are decidedly incomplete. Because of the widespread anti-Semitic undercurrent, many theologians discounted the Hebraic understanding of **the facet of God's grace to fulfill His purposes.** In other words, His grace is given to *produce obedient action!* To better understand the facet of grace we're referring to, we need to look first in the Older Testament, and then how the grace to fulfill Father's purposes impacts followers of Jesus in the Newer Testament and beyond.

One of THE most destructive influences of anti-Semitism within Christianity over the centuries is the *polar distinction* preached by most Christian denominations today that the Older Testament is “God's Law” while the Newer Testament represents “God's grace”. Law and grace are NOT opposites! Yet religious teachers who present them that way eliminate how often God's grace provided specific purpose in the Older Testament.

Picture God's grace to Abraham. By His grace God called Abraham for His express purposes (Genesis 12:1-2). And through His grace God promised the Patriarch and his descendants the land of Israel (Genesis 12:7; 13:14,15; Exodus 33:1). In His grace God promised Abraham a son, Isaac (Genesis 17:19). God in His grace gave the Patriarch an eternal Covenant that would be made possible through the promised Seed, Jesus Christ (Genesis 12:2,3; Galatians 3:16), and even spoke the Gospel in advance to him (Galatians 3:8). From Abraham through David to Joseph and Mary, God's grace kept the promise of the Seed alive until it was fulfilled in the birth of Jesus (Galatians 3:16). Over 300 prophecies foretold the coming of Jesus, shared by God's grace through prophets in the Older Testament. And to all who are genuinely born again, God's grace makes us Abraham's family (Romans 4:16; Galatians 3:29). **God's grace was given in order to fulfill His divine purpose!**

In the Older Testament we also see that it was God's grace in choosing the Israelites as His special treasure (Deuteronomy 7:7; 10:15). His specific purpose for them was to reveal His wisdom to the world (Deuteronomy 4:6; see also John 15:16). And when the Israelites sinned time and again and cried out to Him in humble desperation, God through His grace forgave them because of His purpose to keep His promise to the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Deuteronomy 9:5; 2Kings 13:23; Jeremiah 31:37). All of this *grace with purpose* cascades throughout the Older Testament!

God's grace encompasses a purpose for Jesus's own! It's this one aspect of His grace that anti-Semitic theologians have kept silent about, thereby deceiving so many in Christianity into **religious passivity – no spiritual power and no divine purpose!**

“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of My Father who is in heaven” (Matthew 7:21).

In our January 1997 Newsletter “*Orthodoxy vs. Orthopraxy*” <[https://restorationministries.org/download/199701orthodovsorthopraxy%20\(1\).pdf](https://restorationministries.org/download/199701orthodovsorthopraxy%20(1).pdf)>, we discuss the connection between grace and obedient action. *Orthodoxy*, the central focal point of most theologians, is about *being right*. It emphasizes establishing correct laws and creeds. *Orthopraxy*, on the other hand, may be defined as the way our love for Jesus is expressed in *how we live our lives*. Orthopraxy prompts us to put God's commands into practice, inclining His children to understand and appreciate Father's *grace with purpose* in the Newer Testament. As we review some of the verses, remember that **Father's grace promotes His purposes in His children**. So as we look together into the Newer Testament, remember this pointed warning: “*As God's co-workers we plead with you not to receive God's grace in vain”* (2Corinthians 6:1). Let's begin with a passage which encapsulates orthopraxy and grace with purpose:

“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them” (Ephesians 2:8-10).

If you are *genuinely* born again, you've been given grace to repent and to put your

trust in the shed blood of Jesus to pay the penalty for your sins. Ask yourself:

- How would you know if you've *sinned at all* if it weren't for *God's grace* in giving you His righteous commands in both Testaments of Scripture to live by?
- How would you ever *appreciate our Lord's sacrifice on your behalf* if you hadn't been *given the grace* to realize that you did sin against God by violating His commands (Romans 5:20,21)?
- Did you ever realize that in the Older Testament *God's grace foretold Jesus's sacrifice for you* (Isaiah 53:1-12)?

Most of Christianity camps out on Ephesians 2:8, "*For by grace you have been saved through faith*" but completely disregards that with this grace was given a specific purpose: "*For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them*" (v.10). Again, anti-Semitic theology has limited *charis/grace* to a form of passive orthodoxy while ignoring the orthodoxy/grace of *Hebraic obedient responsiveness* which permeates the Older Testament.

Grace with purpose is clearly fleshed out by a Jewish follower of Jesus: "*Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. . . For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also*" (James 2:17,26). James also cites Abraham in connecting faith with purpose (see 2:21-25). And the self-identified Pharisee, Paul, clearly articulates how grace works in us as we journey toward our salvation:

"Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure" (Philippians 2:12,13).

Genuinely Born Again Under The Lordship of Jesus Your Savior

Grace
"But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be glory both now and forever! Amen" (2Peter 3:18).
"With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And God's grace was so powerfully at work in them all" (Acts 4:33).
"Now Stephen, a man full of God's grace and power, performed great wonders and signs among the people" (Acts 6:8).

Mutually helping each other
 •live joyfully
 •demolish strongholds
 •rid toxic thoughts/memories

Mutually serving your Lord Jesus as His interwoven fabric of faithful family doing Father's will

Collectively becoming more like Jesus of your heaven

Grace
"But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it" (Ephesians 4:7).
"Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms" (Matthew 6:15).
"We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is..." (Romans 12:6).
"I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God's grace given me through the working of His power" (Philippians 3:14).

Heaven & Salvation

The Holy Spirit is given to the *genuinely* born again as the source to grace that promotes Father’s purposes. The indwelling Holy Spirit grace of God *personified in you!* And when the Holy Spirit speaks to your spirit or prompts you to do something or reveals a purpose our Father wants of you, He is giving you ***the privilege to participate with a divine purpose***. So how special to you is that privilege to participate? Are you filled with joy when you’re given a revelation or specific assignment? Or, do you feel imposed upon by Him or fearful to comply? What if someone else with a prophecy or word of knowledge or wisdom tells you a specific insight of Father’s purpose which the Spirit gave them for you? How do you respond? The way you respond makes all the difference to where you are in the funnel. If it isn’t a joyous privilege to have grace imparted to you to fulfill Father’s purposes, then you are most likely bogged down in the darkness of unconfessed sin, demonic stronghold(s), and/or mental toxicity.

“So, as the Holy Spirit says: ‘Today, if you hear His voice do not harden your hearts...’” (Hebrews 3:7,8a)

Spurned Grace
“How much more severely do you think someone deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified them, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace?” (Hebrews 10:29).
“For certain individuals whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord” (Jude 4).

Grace Refused
“This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil” (John 3:19).
“See to it that no one falls short of the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many” (Hebrews 12:15).
“For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?” (Mark 8:36).

Darkness is never an option for the *genuinely* born again!

If our Father’s grace isn’t prompting you to fulfill His purposes, then you need to repent and cast off the passive mandates of anti-Semitic theologians and religious teachers. God’s grace flows throughout Scripture. Internalizing this truth for yourself will make all the difference in how you joyfully enact His life purpose for you in Christ on your way to your salvation!

Abiding in the darkness on the funnel sides has no place for anyone who’s on their journey to their salvation. Instead, come before His throne having lived a life of *privilege* — the *privilege of our Father’s grace* using you for His purposes as one of Jesus’s own. You may be surprised how quickly the Dark Days of Chastisement may fall on this nation and elsewhere. Our Father’s grace-based purposes need to be yours now!

Mike & Sue

2Thessalonians 2:16,17