



# SAVING GRACE IN GENESIS

*How The Grace Of Christ Was Magnified In The  
Commencing Phase Of History Amidst The Chaos  
And Mayhem In The Fallen Estate Of Man*

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**T**he repercussive effects of Adam's fall are ubiquitous, perpetual and immeasurable! When the Spirit of God stops striving with men, the flesh will rot and putrefy itself unto destruction since the process of corruption knows no bounds. We see this in Noah's generation, at Babel and then in Sodom and Gomorrah; here we see a pattern and a trend that becomes historically cyclical; thus shall it be from the beginning till the end of time! At certain places and at certain junctures, the process culminates in a climatic end when the violence of sinners reaches unto the very heavens; the patience of God is exhausted and the longsuffering of God is extinguished. Then erupts judgment from above. The fury of God's wrath overtakes sinners and cities. The destruction thereof often is terrifyingly devastating and conclusive. Human depravity is like a terminal disease. It commences almost undetected but when unchecked, its ravaging power consumes the whole of man without any impeding at all. And then ultimately death ushers in, snuffing out any remaining sliver of hope and whiff of expectation.

All of Adam's posterity (except for our Lord Jesus Christ) are subject to this corruption process. The process is characterized by spiritual declension and moral degradation. When man defects wickedly from God, he also brings violence and mayhem to his fellow beings all around. When a man withdraws more remotely from the only true and living God, he plummets deeper into the moral abyss. Ungodliness is the mother of all immorality. The violation of the command-

ments of the first table of the Decalogue will invariably and inevitably issue in the transgression of the commandments of the second table. The precepts of the first table pertain to man's relationship and duties towards God, whereas the second table relates to his relationship and responsibilities towards his fellowmen. Wherefore spiritual declension goes in tandem with moral corruption.

When considering this corruption process, we rather not undermine the role and place of the evil ones. It all began with the doubts planted in Eve's heart by the Serpent, smack in the garden of Eden. The devil takes advantage of our worldly ambitions and carnal desires. He distorts God's Word, "*Yea, hath God said?*" The Antichrist, veiled somewhat, was there with Cain, even as the opportunity to repent was extended to Cain (Genesis 4:7b; I John 3:12). "*If thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door*". In the end, instead of responding commensurately to the overtures of divine love, Cain ended up allowing the Antichrist to defile and corrupt him. The murder of Abel was the consequence. Abel's blood (for the life of man is therein) cried out from the ground where it was spilled. "*Even so it is now,*" says the greatest of the apostles (Galatians 4:29b). What is it that was then that is also now? "*But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit*" (Galatians 4:29a). As Cain did to Abel, so did Ishmael to Isaac, so did Esau to Jacob and so did the Jews to our Lord Jesus Christ and Paul. Even so it is now, this Antichrist which pits the unconverted against those who have the Spirit of

God. We see it again and again in sundry degrees and variations. Esau's intent to murder Jacob caused the latter to flee for his life. Joseph's siblings, driven by envy and malice, sold him as a slave. In all these instances, the Antichrist and his cohorts are inciting and energizing the ungodly to assail those who are truly converted. It happens in the house of God, among the families of God. *"Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous"* (Psalm 1:5). It is still happening in the best of churches and the best of families. There is an Ishmael in Abraham's family, there is an Esau in Isaac's family and there is an Absalom in David's family. For where the Spirit of God is, there the Antichrist will also hover around.

David was betrayed by Ahithophel. His son Absalom staged a coup d'état. Christ was sold for thirty pieces of silver by Judas. Demas forsook Paul, having loved this present world (II Timothy 4:10a). We see the Roman Catholic Church spilling the blood of the martyrs by the thousands, especially during the span of the Dark Ages. We see the Anglican Church making martyrdom of England's best saints, including William Tyndale. We see the quintessential Puritans, the Pilgrim Fathers, fleeing the shores of England; and hazarding their lives across the Atlantic, to escape the fury of a king who would have a Bible named after him (and the pretenders who seek glory for the work of translation commit idolatry in the very preface of the self same Bible; for surely the real work was actually done by Tyndale).

We see it again when the modern day Baptists (whether strict or lenient, it makes no difference to me) speak derogatorily of the Anabaptists, who suffered so cruelly at the hands of the Papacy; for thirty miles, the road bound for Rome was flanked on both sides by their disembodied heads, dripping with blood and shored up on poles.

It was to the Jews who claimed Abraham as their father that our Lord addressed thus: "*Ye are of your father the devil... he was a murderer from the beginning*" (John 8:44). Like the Jews, we may enjoy many spiritual blessings, advantages and privileges, but if we do not press home all these to the conversion of our souls, then they shall avail us nothing. Nay, we inevitably end up persecuting brethren who truly have the Spirit of God indwelling or working in them!

The Holy Scriptures is at pains to emphasize that the patterns and trends of history repeat itself cyclically. Even in the Book of Genesis, we are afforded an insight into God's eternal plan. The Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last, even the Potentate of time, reveals to us matters concerning eschatology even in Genesis. "*Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like Me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure*" (Isaiah 46:9-10). It is a great marvel to behold wondrous things concerning the Gospel and the final apostasy in the Book of Genesis.

One of the saddest episodes in Genesis is the account relating to Joseph's siblings. After they had buried Israel, their father, they were afflicted by a bout of phobia. They were haunted by the daunting prospect that Joseph would then avenge the evil that they had done to him ere. Now when Joseph came to realize this, he wept (Genesis 50: 17b). Why did Joseph weep?

I cannot but attribute part of Joseph's grief to the incredulity at the fact that his brethren should have doubted the character of Christ's love in him. For seventeen years he had nourished and sustained them. For seventeen years he had shown that it was all in the wonderful and loving plan of God to overrule their evil, so as to save them all. Now they were supposed to testify that God's overruling Providence was designed to save their posterity. The fact that the brethren had misgivings and skepticism about Joseph's motives and intentions underlined their inability and want of capacity to appreciate the love of God shed abroad in the heart of Joseph.

Joseph never attributed any of the goodness and kindness he extended towards them to himself. It was the grace of God working effectually in him. He could have said with Paul, "*Yet not I, but Christ liveth in me*" (Galatians 2:20b). It was the grace of God in Noah that made him a preacher of righteousness to warn the ungodly of the flood of judgment that loomed close. It is very sad when the grace of Christ cannot be acknowledged in those who possess it. It is very lamentable when the love of Christ

cannot be distinguished from human affections, even the very best of them. As John writes: *“Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God”* (I John 3:1a). And again he writes: *“Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren”* (I John 3:16).

Is it not a mark of the unregenerate that they are unable to identify the love of Christ? We think of Cain, Ishmael, Esau and, of course, the siblings of Joseph. Why is it that they could not perceive the love of Christ? *“Therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not”* (I John 3:1b). Do not forget that John’s epistle was written so that *“we do know that we know Him”* (I John 2:3a). It is an epistle that provokes us to seek for the assurance of our conversion. We are exhorted therein to examine ourselves for the marks of the regenerate. Perhaps John’s epistle might also have been drafted to warn us that as yet we have not known Him (I John 4:1)! What John implies by “knowing Him” is that we are actually reconciled and united with Christ Jesus through the forgiveness of sins by virtue of His precious blood. It is knowing Christ as our personal Saviour, having been brought experimentally to a sense of our deliverance from our fallen estate.

Perhaps not all the siblings of Joseph doubted the character of his love. But the majority of them did at this point of time. Peradventure after the demise of their father they realized that the love in Joseph was genuine; it is out of this world and extraor-

dinary. When they would have come to the stage where they had the capacity to perceive the love of Christ in Joseph, that it was because they too have been finally convinced of and have experienced what redeeming grace is and what divine love is. For it takes grace to perceive grace. It takes the love of Christ in us to apprehend the love of Christ in others. Even as Ruth cleaved to Naomi; as David confided in Samuel; as the disciples followed Christ; and as Timothy and Luke consorted to Paul, when almost everyone else had virtually forsaken him (II Timothy 4:11,16). Israel saw grace working effectually in his son Joseph. Rebekah saw the glory of that grace in her father-in-law, Abraham, and enough of the sparks of it in Jacob to grant her a plateau of assurance concerning his spiritual disposition. She may have struggled to see grace in her husband, Isaac, particularly towards the latter part of his life, because he had allowed it to be eclipsed by his obsession for Esau's worldly attainments. Eve was also plagued with grief after the demise of Abel, until she saw grace in Seth and Enos (Genesis 4:25-26).

How deplorable and incongruous it is when you maintain that you are seeking for saving grace and yet persecute those that have already obtained it. It is equally inconsistent when you assume that you know Christ Jesus and yet your heart is found void of His love. *“In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother. For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that*

*we should love one another. Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous" (I John 3:10-12).*

There are those like Cain who, for the lack of repentance, make themselves vulnerable to the corrupting and defiling encroachments of the Antichrist (the wicked one). It is to warn such a generation that the polemic epistles (for example, II Timothy, Hebrews, II Peter, I John and Jude) were penned. Like Noah, the preacher of righteousness, the Holy Spirit through these epistles is warning those who think that they can serve both mammon and God together. We cannot put self above Christ. We remember what Paul said about those who were engaged in the Gospel work: "*For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's*" (Philippians 2: 21). Christ must have the pre-eminence in our lives.

There are others who join the great confederacies of the day and build their own versions of the tower of Babel. The tower represents man's own efforts to reach heaven and God; they deny the fact that man is subject to total depravity and therefore, cannot redeem himself from his spiritual predicament, nay, not an iota! Those that forsake the diligent seeking of the grace of God, sovereignly and freely bestowed, would end up fabricating a religion of their own fancy. These end up as workers of iniquity (Matthew 7:21-23). A considerable nexus of the psalms affirms this. "*Let not the foot of pride come against me, and let not the hand of*

*the wicked remove me. There are the workers of iniquity fallen: they are cast down, and shall not be able to rise” (Psalm 36:11,12).*

But let us learn from the humble and contrite. Even as Abraham was justified when the righteousness of Christ was imputed to him, not for the achievements he accomplished when he was called to move out of Haran but because of his faith; for even faith is a gift of God (Ephesians 2:8); it was at a point in time in the course of his pilgrimage that saving grace was wrought in Abraham’s life. This is underscored in Genesis 15:6 (See also Romans 4:1-3; Galatians 3:6; James 2:23). The Bible does not deplore nor despise what Abraham had done before his “Genesis 15:6” encounter. We learn from the life of Jacob that a man may have many authentic spiritual experiences but without a true Peniel, wherein his name is changed from Jacob to Israel, all his other experiences will avail him nothing. All our Bethels and Padan-arams will not succour nor alleviate us, if we fail to find our Peniel. This is exactly what the Lord Jesus Christ was attempting to bring home to our hearts when He often warned us, *“For many are called, but few are chosen”* (Matthew 20:16, 22:14). **✠**

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