

Grace in the New Testament

by Jacob O. Meyer

Why is there so much confusion in the doctrines of churchianity? Why should church members assert that

they believe in the biblical commandments while on the other hand they attest that Yahweh's law has been done away by His grace?

A correct understanding of the

doctrine of grace can only be obtained by harmonizing all the passages in the sacred Scriptures relating to this subject. There are many explicit scriptural texts integral to a correct under-

The New Covenant and New Testament

The Evangel According to

Matthew

1 The book of the genealogy of Yahshua the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

2 Abraham procreated Isaac; and Isaac procreated Jacob; and Jacob procreated Judah and his brethren; 3 and Judah procreated Hezeq and Zerah of Tamar; and Hezeq procreated Hezron; and Hezron procreated Aram; 4 and Aram procreated Amminadab; and Amminadab procreated Nahshon; and Nahshon procreated Salmon; 5 and Salmon procreated Boaz of Rahab; and Boaz procreated Obed of Ruth; and Obed procreated Jesse; 6 and Jesse procreated David the king.

7 And David procreated Solomon of her that had been the wife of Uriah; 7 and Solomon procreated Rehoboam; and Rehoboam procreated Abijah; and Abijah procreated Asa; 8 and Asa procreated Jehoshaphat; and Jehoshaphat procreated Joram; and Joram procreated Uzziah; 9 and Uzziah procreated Jotham; and Jotham procreated Ahaz; and Ahaz procreated Hezekiah; 10 and Hezekiah procreated Manasseh; and Manasseh procreated Amon; and Amon procreated Josiah; 11 and Josiah procreated Jechoniah and his brethren, at the time of the carrying away to Babylon.

12 And after the carrying away to Babylon, Jechoniah procreated Shealtiel; and Shealtiel procreated Zerubbabel; 13 and Zerubbabel procreated Abiud; and Abiud procreated Eliakim; and Eliakim procreated Azor; 14 and Azor procreated Sadoc; and Sadoc procreated Achim; and Achim procreated Eliud; 15 and Eliud procreated Eleazar; and Eleazar procreated Matthan; and Matthan procreated Jacob; 16 and Jacob procreated Joseph the hus-

band of Miriam, of whom was born Yahshua, who is called the Messiah.

17 So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; and from David to the carrying away to Babylon fourteen generations; and from the carrying away to Babylon to the Messiah fourteen generations.

18 Now the birth of Yahshua the Messiah was on this wise: When his mother Miriam had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found with child of the Holy Spirit.

19 And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privately. 20 But when he thought on these things, behold, an angel of Yahweh appeared to him in a dream, saying, Joseph, son of David, fear not to take to you Miriam your wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. 21 And she shall bring forth a son; and you shall call his name YAHSHUA, for he shall save his people from their sins. 22 Now all this is come to pass, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Yahweh through the prophet, saying,

23 Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son,

And they shall call his name Immanuel,

which is, being interpreted, Elohim is with us. 24 And Joseph a seer from his sleep, and did as the angel of Yahweh commanded him, and took to him his wife; 25 and knew her not till she had brought forth a son; and he called his name YAHSHUA.

2 Now when Yahshua was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of

standing of the New Covenant. People too frequently appeal only to the New Testament, and they further narrow the field by particularly limiting themselves to the writings of Paul to explain the doctrine expressed by the word **grace**.

In effect, they nullify the Messiah's own declaration of Matthew 5:17-20. *"Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets: I came not to destroy, but to fulfill. For truly I say to you, Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law, till all things be accomplished. Whoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven: but whoever shall do and teach them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say to you, that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven."*

We must never forget what the Apostle Peter said of Paul's writings in 2 Peter 3:15-16. *"And account that the longsuffering of our Master is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given to him, wrote to you; as also in all his letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to be understood, which the ignorant and unlearned wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, to their own destruction."*

The widespread, popular teaching of the no-law doctrine has taken firm root in the minds of people today. When they encounter seemingly nebulous and obscure passages in the Bible that appear to do away with the law of Yahweh, doubts immediately enter their mind. Then they simply jump the rails of contextual truth to follow the crowd into error. The no-law doctrine has monopolized Christian theology for so long that these doubts readily take root.

All too frequently the no-law advocates hasten to quote from the book of Galatians. Paul's letter to Yahweh's Assemblies in Galatia in no way annuls the law of Yahweh. Conversely, when correctly under-

stood, Paul's book places *great emphasis* upon keeping commandments of Yahweh instead of obeying doctrines and commandments of men.

When one demonstrates his obedience to the Heavenly Father by keeping His commandments, unconverted people ridicule him as though he depends exclusively on works for his salvation. Usually those who believe in grace alone recite Ephesians 2:8-9 to prove that there is no longer any need to keep any commandments for salvation. This passage reads, *"For by grace have you been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of Yahweh; not of works, that no man should glory."*

Yahweh has the same source—it is a gift from the Almighty. The human being cannot create eternal life. It must come only from the Most High. When Yahweh's people are given their spiritual body it will be a gift that can come only from Yahweh, because He has created it.

A much better translation of Ephesians 2:8-10 is found in the **New English Bible**. *"For it is by His grace you are saved, through trusting Him; it is not your own doing. It is Yahweh's gift, not a reward for work done. There is nothing for anyone to boast of. For we are Yahweh's handiwork, created in Messiah Yahshua to devote ourselves to the good deeds for which Yahweh has designed us."*

 **The no-law doctrine has monopolized Christian theology for so long that these doubts readily take root.**

Salvation—A Free Gift of Life

Let us analyze this passage more thoroughly. First, we learn that we are saved by *grace*. Through *faith* in Yahweh's Word we receive this blessing. *Faith is believing and trusting*. Salvation does not come through human effort; it is a free gift from Yahweh. It cannot be earned by works. No human can **purchase** his salvation by **anything** he might do.

What is life? Can we define its essentials? Is life something we as humans can by ourselves originate? Can a human create new life forms? Of course not! *Life is a gift* bestowed by Yahweh. He alone gives life to us and eventually, when He takes it back, the human being dies and becomes a dead corpse. Everlasting life in a spiritual existence in the Kingdom of

Works Required

Notice **The Sacred Scriptures**, Bethel Edition, translation of verse 10. *"For we are his workmanship, created in the Messiah Yahshua for good works, which Yahweh previously prepared that we should walk in them."*

Paul does not hesitate to inform his readers that we are the workmanship of Yahweh, created in Messiah Yahshua to do good works, which HE ESTABLISHED BEFOREHAND, BEFORE THE NEW COVENANT ERA. We must do the WORKS that Yahweh has established and commanded in the sacred Scriptures. The definition of works is **ACTIVE FAITH IN, OR OBEDIENCE TO, YAHWEH**.

Obviously, this passage does not convey what many religious groups today want to believe. Ephesians

Grace in the New Testament

2:8-10 does not **ABOLISH** the law that Yahweh gave to man. Rather, it serves as a **REMINDER** to True Believers that **we cannot SAVE ourselves.**

Salvation is a free gift through the grace of Yahweh. It was put in effect so that no one can boast that he had saved himself.

But Almighty Yahweh will not bestow this gift of salvation upon the disobedient. He will not confer the gift of the Holy Spirit upon a person who will not repent and meet established conditions explained in the Word of Yahweh. (To repent means to be sorry and broken up for sins committed.) Acts 5:32 makes this quite plain. *"And we are witnesses of these things; and so is the Holy Spirit, which Yahweh has given to them that OBEY him."* No one can be certain he has received the Holy Spirit of Yahweh—unless he has fulfilled these scriptural requirements. He must not submit to sin (1 John 3:4), but must be humbly submissive to the commandments of Yahweh.

Defining Grace

Have you checked the lexical meaning of the word **grace** in the more prominent reference works? If we were to check for a definition in a lexicon, the one that is found in the **Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Bible** is one of the more lucid: *"that gratuitous gift of [Yahweh] to man."* The **Hasting's Dictionary of the Bible** says **grace** comes from the Latin *gratia*, and means "favor," either received from or shown to another.

The **Webster's New World Dictionary**, Second Collegiate Edition, defines **grace** as *"pleasing quality, favor, thanks."* This well-known authority continues, *"a) the unmerited love and favor of [Yahweh] toward man, b) divine influence acting in man to make him pure and morally strong, c) the condition of a person thus influenced, d) a special virtue given to a person by [Yahweh]."*

The definition given in the section in letter **a** above is the most applicable to this study. Grace is the love and favor of Yahweh given to undeserving man. Notice that nowhere in those definitions is there any indication that at some future date the law of Yahweh would be annulled or done away. Rather, they show that grace means mankind would receive a special recognition, favor, love, or kindness from our Heavenly Father.

Grace Defined in Biblical Languages

Instead of speculating on the meaning of the word **grace**, however, let us scrutinize the languages in which the Bible was originally written and transmitted to us for here we

Testament. The **Brown, Driver, and Briggs Hebrew Lexicon** translates the verb *chanan* as *"show favor, be gracious."* The cognate Semitic languages yield the definitions *"be merciful, compassionate, favorable, inclined towards."*

Yet another word used in the Hebrew text of the Old Testament and translated **grace** or **lovingkindness** is the word *chesed*. It is a very unique word and means *"goodness, kindness,"* or *"to do and show kindness toward another person."* The root is *chasad*, meaning *"to be good or kind."* This word also means *"to do things in a righteous manner."*

In the Greek text of the New Testament, the word translated **grace** is *charis*. (It sounds almost like

 *owhere is there any indication that at some future date the law of Yahweh would be annulled or done away.*

shall discover the truth of this doctrine. There are several words in the Old Testament that have been translated **grace** or **graciousness**.

The first is *chen*. It has been translated in the Old Testament as *"favor, grace, or graciousness, pleasant, precious, well-favored."*

Another word appearing in the Old Testament is *chanan*. It is taken from the same verbal root of the word *chen*. It means *"to bend or stoop in kindness to an inferior; to favor, or bestow something upon that person."* It has been translated in various ways similar to the word *chen*. These definitions appear in the **Hebrew and Chaldee Dictionary** of the **Strong's Concordance** and the **Holliday Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon** of the Old

"grace.") It means *"favor, grace, gracious care or help, good will."* In a practical application of good will, it means *"a gracious deed or gift, benefaction."* This is the definition that we find in the **Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament** by Walter Bauer, as translated by Arndt and Gingrich.

Interestingly, the **Strong's Concordance Greek Dictionary of the New Testament** defines the word *charis* as *"graciousness (as gratifying), of manner or act (abstractly) or concerning lit., fig. or spiritual: especially the divine influence upon the heart and its reflection in the life; including gratitude."* Dr. Bullinger in the **Companion Bible** translates the word *charis* as *"free and undeserved kindness."*

Grace—An Active Force

Notice again that the word *charis* denotes an ACTIVE FORCE. This active force **moves** upon the heart and **influences** or **dictates** the **conduct** of one's life. Nowhere have we found in any of these definitions *even* the slightest indication that through grace the law of Yahweh was abolished when the Savior died upon the tree of Calvary. Conversely, grace is shown to be something moving (acting) upon the heart of a sincere, humble person to cause him to alter (change, convert) his conduct.

Grace Is Not Licentiousness

Would you believe that grace in the Bible means *exactly opposite* of what

exactly what Christianity ultimately teaches—that the law of Yahweh was done away and that everyone can do what he personally thinks is right?

Another translation of this verse found in the **New English Bible** clarifies considerably. To get a complete context, we must include verse 3 also.

"My friends, I was fully engaged in writing to you about our salvation—which is yours no less than ours—when it became urgently necessary to write at once and appeal to you to join the struggle in defense of the faith, the faith which Yahweh entrusted to His people once and for all. It is in danger from certain persons who have wormed their way in, the very men whom Scripture long ago marked down for the doom they have incurred. They are the enemies of

of Yahweh's law, 1 John 3:4. Those who reject the law of Yahweh by failing to obey it, and conversely implement a system of licentiousness are **guilty of denying** the sacrifice of Yahshua the Messiah, who offered Himself as our substitute sacrifice. He shed His blood that we might have remission of sins. Remember—the scriptural definition of sin is the breaking of Yahweh's laws, 1 John 3:4. Those who turn the grace of Yahweh into license to do as they please have obviously denied Yahshua because **they continue to transgress Yahweh's law**. They live in **rebellion** to the way of life our Heavenly Father wishes us to live. Paradoxically, already in apostolic times **false teachers** were teaching that Yahweh's commandments were annulled to implement grace, an obviously false doctrine. Should we not consider as false teachers those who teach a no-law doctrine in these modern times? Think about this, and be consistent!

Dispensation—Not an Age

The term "dispensation of grace" is heard frequently in churchianity. What can it mean? Many Christians depend on it to support their no-law doctrine. This term is **used only ONCE** in the entire Bible, in Ephesians 3:2. *"If so be that you have heard of the DISPENSATION OF THAT GRACE of Yahweh which was given me toward you."*

In the **New English Bible** this verse is translated, *"For surely you have heard how Yahweh has assigned the gift of His grace to me for your benefit."* No mention is made of "dispensation" here, prompting us to pursue a further analysis of the verse and seek an answer to this pertinent question.

The word **dispensation** is used also in 1 Corinthians 9:17 in the **King James Version**. We find there, *"For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation of the Glad Tidings is committed unto me."*

The Greek word used in both instances is derived from **oikonomia**. It

Those who turn the grace of Yahweh into license to do as they please have obviously denied Yahshua, because they continue to transgress Yahweh's law.

Christianity believes? Turn to Judah, verse 4, for proof: *"For there are certain men who sneaked in secretly, even they who were of old written of beforehand to this condemnation, lawless men, turning the grace of our Elohim into lasciviousness, and DENYING our only Master and Sovereign, Yahshua the Messiah."*

An analysis of this verse will confirm that it is wicked people who are guilty of turning (changing) the grace (unmerited mercy, kindness, favor) of the Almighty into lasciviousness. This last word means *"wantonness, tending to execute lustful desire, licentious."* Consequently, it could easily be translated as "license to do as you please."

That is an amazing declaration by the writer Judah (one of Yahshua's own brothers, most likely)! Isn't this

religion. They pervert the free favor of our Mighty One into licentiousness, disowning Yahshua Messiah, our only master and ruler."

Especially noteworthy is the statement that *those who turn the grace of Yahweh into licentiousness are guilty of DENYING YAHSHUA THE MESSIAH and THE SALVATION OF YAHWEH ELOHIM*. How is this possible if Yahshua the Messiah came to repeal or annul the law of Yahweh and bestow upon us unlimited mercy or grace, as Christians believe? The Christian definition of grace makes it appear as if man could make his own rules for life.

The scripturally founded definition of grace **rejects licentiousness** in favor of **obedience** to Yahweh's commandments. Sin is the transgression

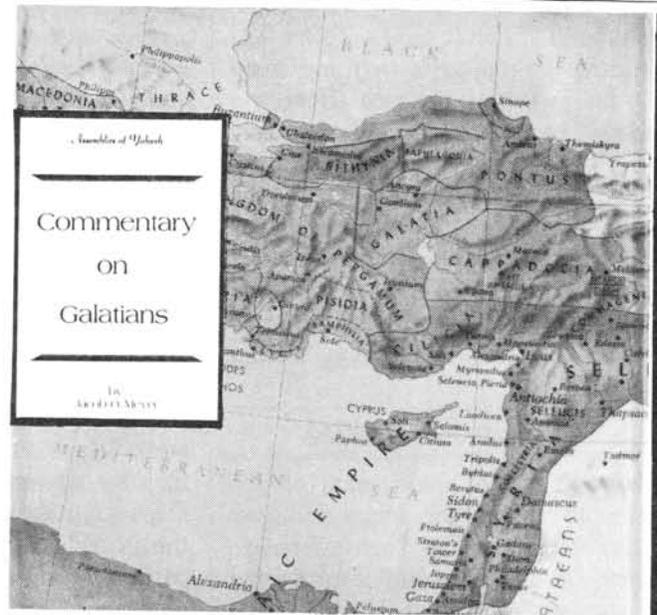
Commentary on Galatians

The book of Galatians is an enigma and a stumbling block to many.

It doesn't need to be. This verse-by-verse study provides geographical, cultural, and historical information vital to understanding this book.

Per copy price—\$3.00 plus \$1.00 postage and handling. Don't delay! Send for your copy immediately.

Assemblies of Yahweh
P.O. Box C
Bethel, PA 19507



means "a *stewardship*" or "*administration*," and indicates the distributing of small quantities of material, which is the responsibility of a steward or manager.

The action is comparable to and can be illustrated by the function of a paper cup dispenser. It dispenses, or gives out, one paper cup at a time. Out of a large quantity of cups inserted into the dispenser, we receive one cup at a time as the need arises.

The dispensation of grace operates in a similar way. Whenever someone needs Yahweh's favor, mercy, kindness, or forgiveness, he is granted a small portion to pardon the sin he has then committed. In this way the penalty for sin—death (Romans 6:23)—is forgiven and the offender is spared from awesome judgment. But, Yahweh does not forgive premeditated sin. See Hebrews 10:26-31.

An entire false doctrine has been constructed upon the feeble premise of dispensationalism. Some theologians have erroneously conceived of dispensationalism as periods of time. For example, they designate the time of Adam as a no-law dispensation. They designate the polity of Israel as the dispensation of law. They claim we are now living in yet another period, the dispensation of grace.

We should understand that the

time in which we are living is the age when grace is being dispensed, and not another biblical "dispensational age." Nevertheless, some theologians divide the Bible into a number of dispensations—three, five, and even seven—when they have no biblical grounds to do this. This division comes from the Scofield Bible. Nowhere in the Scriptures do we encounter terms like "dispensation of no-law, and dispensation of law." Therefore, we are given no liberty to use them.

The Biblical Origin of Grace

The first time an offer for grace is given to man is in Genesis 3, the account of the sin of Adam and Eve. They had allowed Satan to influence them and manipulate them into breaking the commandments of Yahweh. **The just punishment for that sin was pronounced in the second chapter.** "And Yahweh Elohim commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of knowing the good and [knowing the] evil, you shall not eat of it: for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die." The wages of sin is death, Romans 6:23. From the beginning, death was the penalty, and it shall always be so.

When Almighty Yahweh learned what had occurred when Eve took of the fruit of the tree and had given

some to her husband to eat, He knew that the punishment for sin had to be automatic. Yahweh knew that the man and woman would have to die, but **He passed over (exempted) them in judgment.** He gave them grace and allowed them centuries more to live, although limiting them to less than a one thousand-year prophetic day. Please see 2 Peter 3:8-13.

"But forget not this one thing, beloved, that one day is with Yahweh as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. Yahweh is not slack concerning his promise, as some count slackness; but is longsuffering toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But as the day of Yahweh will come as a thief; in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall be dissolved with fervent heat, and the earth and the works that are in it shall be burned up. Seeing that these things are thus all to be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in all holy living and righteousness, looking for and earnestly desiring the day of Yahweh, by reason of which the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? But, according to his promise, we look for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells."

Forgiveness of sin did not annul every penalty for that sin, however. Adam and Eve *died*. They en-

countered difficult times. Man was required thereafter to earn his bread by the sweat of his face (Hebrew—nose). The earth which had previously been benevolent turned hostile, producing thorns and thistles.

The woman's rate of conception has been increased, as well as her sorrow and pain in giving birth to children. She was always, from that point on, to be in complete submission to her husband.

Substitute Sacrifice

But Yahweh made coats of the skins of animals for Adam and Eve. Yahweh's grace had been offered to them. A substitute life of an animal was taken. Yahweh visibly impressed upon them that sin brings death, and a life must be taken to pay for that sin by killing right before their eyes one of the animals they must have dearly loved. Adam and Eve continued to live after accepting the sacrifice, but the penalty of sin was passed on to their descendants.

Almighty Yahweh's grace is described so beautifully and magnificently in Exodus 34:6-7. "*And Yahweh passed by before him, and proclaimed, Yahweh, Yahweh, an El merciful and*

gracious, slow to anger, and abundant in goodness and truth; keeping mercy for thousands, FORGIVING INIQUITY AND TRANSGRESSION AND SIN; and that will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation."

Yahweh describes His attitude toward man as filled with mercy, graciousness, patience, and abundant in goodness and truth. He describes Himself as a Mighty One who is *merciful* to thousands by forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin. All of these qualities are clearly manifest in the doctrine of grace. Forgiveness and pardon for sin may be received when someone repents. Sin is the transgression of Yahweh's Law (1 John 3:4), and repentance of disobedience will merit Yahweh's mercy.

David's Experience

After David had committed adultery with Bathsheba, he tried to cover his sin by committing an even worse sin—murdering Bathsheba's husband, Uriah. Yahweh sent His prophet to David to point out the error of his way. David immediately confessed, "I have sinned against

Yahweh." Nathan the prophet replied, "... *Yahweh also has put away your sin; you shall not die. However, because by this deed you have given great occasion to the enemies of Yahweh to blaspheme, the child also that is born to you shall surely die,*" 2 Samuel 12:13-14.

Conscience-stricken, David wrote a very moving Psalm. He said, "*Have mercy upon me, O Elohim, according to your lovingkindness: according to the multitude of your tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin,*" Psalm 51:1-2. This passage of Scripture clearly reveals that grace means forgiveness and mercy for sins. Grace is understood as blotting out transgressions. **David did not continue to commit sin** or strongly insist that Yahweh's law had been annulled in his case. Nor did David insist on a no-law doctrine. Rather, **he poured out his heart** before Almighty Yahweh in sincere and honest repentance, confessing his sins and repenting of them. Then he changed his personal conduct. He **promised** Yahweh that he would never again commit such sin. (Transgression of the law.)

Grace Does Not Cover Willful Sin

Paul shows us that we must not continue to sin after we receive the grace of Yahweh. "*What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? By no means. We who died to sin, how shall we any longer live in it?*" Romans 6:1-2

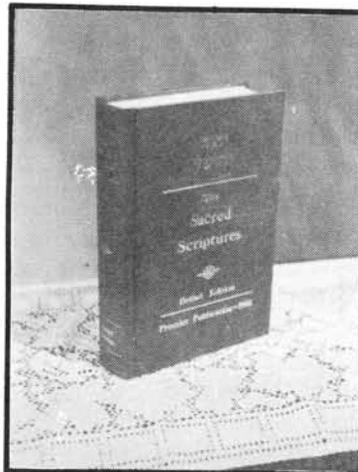
Remember, sin is the transgression of Yahweh's law, 1 John 3:4. We cannot continue to transgress His law, so that grace may be all-encompassing and cover all. We must obey the law of Yahweh to merit the kindness and mercy of the love of our Heavenly Father. When someone has come to a knowledge of the truth and continues to sin, there remains no more sacrifice for that sin.

Paul explained grace in Romans 3. He says in verse 20, "*Because by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified in*

Never study the Bible without a Bible.

The Assemblies of Yahweh has restored the Sacred Names back into the text from which the translators removed them. **The Sacred Scriptures, Bethel Edition**, has been proven to be consistent, conservative and reliable. Copies are available at a cost of \$10.00 plus \$2.00 (U.S. funds) postage and handling.

Assemblies of Yahweh
P.O. Box C
Bethel, PA 19507



Grace in the New Testament

his sight; for through the law comes the knowledge of sin." Obviously, those who keep Yahweh's law cannot bequeath life to themselves. No one can be justified by the deeds of the law. The word **justified** means "to be judged innocent or declared innocent of wrongdoing."

Only Yahweh can forgive sin, and He has extended a blanket pardon called "justification" to those who have previously sinned in ignorance. When the repentant believer comes to realize his sins through reading the Word of Yahweh, all his past sins are forgiven. But, if he continues to sin, he will be refused further grace.

Then Paul further says that the righteousness of Yahweh is mani-

Notice what the Apostle Paul says in 2 Corinthians 6:1. "And working together with him we entreat also that you receive not the grace of Yahweh in vain."

How can someone receive the grace of Yahweh in vain, or unprofitably?

The answer is found in Hebrews 10. Let us carefully read again verses 26 to 31.

"For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remains no more a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fierceness of fire which shall devour the adversaries. A man that has violated Moses' law dies without compassion on the word of two or three witnesses: of how more severe punishment, think you, shall he be judged worthy, who has trodden underfoot the Son of

Son of Yahweh again, and put him to an open shame. For the land which has drunk the rain that comes often upon it, and brings forth herbs useful for them for whose sake it is also tilled, receives blessings from Yahweh: but if it bears thorns and thistles, it is rejected and near to a curse; whose end is to be burned." (Hebrews 6:4-8)

"For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world through the knowledge of the Master and Savior Yahshua the Messiah, they are again entangled in it and overcome, the last state has become worse with them than the first. For it were better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after knowing it, to turn back from the holy commandment delivered to them. It has happened to me according to the true proverb. The dog turns to his own vomit again, and the sow that had washed, to wallowing in the mire." (2 Peter 2:20-22)

The Termination of Grace

Bible students tend to think of the age of grace as never ending. However, there are several Scriptures that predict an end to the general mercy of Yahweh. Obviously, an end to the proffered grace to a generation that spurns it will mean universal judgment.

"There is a generation that curses their father, and bless not their mother. There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet are not washed from their filthiness. There is a generation, oh how lofty are their eyes! And their eyelids are lifted up. There is a generation whose teeth are as swords, and their jaw teeth as knives, to devour the poor from off the earth, and the needy from among men." (Proverbs 30:11-14)

Zechariah the prophet predicted an end to grace in chapter 11 of his book. The declaration says: "For I will no more pity [have grace upon] the inhabitants of the land, says Yahweh; but, lo, I will deliver the men every one into his neighbor's hand, and into the hand of his king; and they shall strike the land, and out of their hand I will not deliver them," verse 6.

This prophetic utterance describes a withdrawal of grace. Apparently, conflict between nations will ensue at that time. Yahweh will no longer



Yahweh describes His attitude toward man as filled with mercy, graciousness, patience, and abundant in goodness and truth.

festated because it is witnessed in the law and the prophets. Paul shows that all have sinned and "come short of the glory of Yahweh," but we are justified (judged innocent) freely by Yahweh's grace through Yahshua's redemption. Yahshua the Messiah gave Himself as a sacrifice to obtain forgiveness of our sins for us. This is a free gift to every member of the human race. All people who receive this free gift and turn in obedience to our Heavenly Father will receive salvation. Those who spurn Yahweh's mercy will perish in the lake of fire. It makes no difference if someone continues to insist on a no-law doctrine—the fires of Gehenna await the sinner! Sin is the transgression of the law, 1 John 3:4.

Yahweh, and has counted the blood of the covenant with which he was sanctified an unholy thing, and done despite to the Spirit of grace? For we know him that said, Vengeance belongs to me, I will repay. And again, Yahweh shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living Elohim."

The spirit of grace is rejected by those who despise the blood of the covenant. After one understands the truth but continues to sin, grace is withdrawn, Hebrews 6:4-8. "For as touching those who were once enlightened and tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and tasted the good word of Yahweh, and the powers of the age to come, and then fell away, it is impossible to renew them again to repentance; since they impale to themselves the

Grace in the New Testament

withhold judgment from His disobedient people. Zechariah continues by saying that he took two shepherd's crooks or clubs, which he named Beauty (Hebrew—graciousness) and Bands (ropes or bonds), to feed the poor of the flock (downtrodden believers).

After feeding the persecuted flock, Zechariah explained, *"And I took my staff Beauty, and cut it apart, that I might break my covenant which I had made with all the peoples. And it was broken in that day; and thus the poor of the flock that gave heed to me knew that it was the word of Yahweh."* Zechariah 11:10-11.

When the patience of Yahweh in dealing with His erring people comes to an end, He will do what any father would do to a rebellious child. Mercy ends when outright defiance is evident. Then *punishment* is the only remaining course of action.

When Yahweh acts it will be to manifest what was already a fact—that the covenant between Himself and humankind had been broken. A covenant is based upon the mutual loyalty, trust, and faith of the endorsers. When one party breaks the agreement, the other should continue to keep his promise as a witness against the unfaithful. **Yahweh has faithfully done this.** Repentant people share in the covenant, but sinners do not. He has maintained His fidelity even though Israel has continued to refuse His efforts to reform them. Eventually His patience will be exhausted, and Yahweh will terminate an offer of His covenant by pouring out punishment upon the disobedient.

For those who are awaiting the eleventh hour to repent of their sins and then seek to establish a personal relationship with the Heavenly Father, caution should be exercised. The mercy of Yahweh will suddenly be terminated when sinners least expect it. As the great tribulation reaches a climax, **Yahweh will no longer heed the prayers of those who have delayed.**

Notice this warning from the pen

of the Apostle John. *"And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of Yahweh, and from his power; and none was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels should be finished."* (Revelation 15:8)

Can you detect the relationship expressed between these two passages of Scripture? Yahweh will turn His back on His sinful creation and will not heed their pleas for mercy. The fault is their own. They could have acted while the offer of grace was in force. Like the five foolish virgins who had neglected to fill their lamps and vessels with adequate oil, those who plead for grace while punishment is in progress will find the door to Yahweh's presence closed—per-

giveness, and pardon for sin. But, we have also observed that if someone hopes to partake of Yahweh's grace, he must bring his life into obedience to the commandments of our Heavenly Father.

No one may continue to sin so he can use grace as a covering for wickedness. The grace of Yahweh will not be turned into license to do as you please. Grace is favor bestowed upon the human creation of Yahweh through His love to pardon the sins of the past.

When someone oversteps Yahweh's commandments, he will receive pardon at His hand **if he has not transgressed maliciously**, premeditated, his sin. Grace is given only



Hose who are wise in serving Yahweh shall be able to find protection during the tribulation, but there is no time to lose.

manently shut and locked.

An example of one who had adequately prepared himself to avoid the judgment of Yahweh during a time of widespread wickedness was Noah. He withstood the influence of his contemporaries, and thereby found grace in the eyes of Yahweh. He was faithful in living according to Yahweh's covenant. We are living in an era similar to the one during which Noah built the ark. There is safety in serving Yahweh. Those who are wise shall be able to find protection during the tribulation, but there is no time to lose. Soon the judgment of Yahweh will fall upon this evil, sick, worldly system.

We have seen that grace is defined as **unmerited kindness, mercy, for-**

to those who remain humble and merit forgiveness. Sin will not be condoned with impunity by Yahweh. He will give grace to the humble who recognize their human frailties. They know they will receive pardon if they strive to serve Almighty Yahweh to the best of their ability. Those who deliberately transgress the commandments are punished.

"And Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, Speak to Aaron and to his sons, saying, On this wise you shall bless the children of Israel: you shall say to them, Yahweh bless you, and keep you: Yahweh make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you [give you grace]: Yahweh lift up his face to you, and give you peace. So shall they put my name on the children of Israel; and I will bless them." (Numbers 6:22-27)