

“Amazing Grace”

In the *Old Testament* (Exodus 19-20), God gave to the Jewish people His *LAW* (the Ten Commandments). Moses was the man who received the two stone tablets on which the law was written. It happened at Mount Sinai, and it was a fearful experience – there was lightning and thunder, followed by earthquakes near the mountain, and a lot of fire and smoke on the mountain.

God’s law is quite *frightening*, because its standards are much higher than a country’s civil laws – God looks for *complete truth* in our hearts.

In the *New Testament*, however, God emphasizes another principle: *GRACE*. Grace is found in the Old Testament, but it is highlighted in the New Testament.

GRACE DEFINED

Grace is the concept of a gift, something which we receive for free. It is obviously the characteristic of a God of love who has compassion on us. Grace has been described as *God loving us free of charge* (*He charges us nothing for it*), ***no strings attached*** (*no obligations on our part*), ***on the house*** (*He is paying for everything*).

In Matthew 20:1-16 there is a beautiful illustration of GRACE. A man employed some labourers, and agreed to give them one penny a day – and he “went according to the book” and gave them exactly what was promised. This is like the Old Testament law – God gave it and told the people that if they kept it, then they would live (the problem was that no one *could* keep it).

The other groups of labourers in Matthew 20, however, were promised whatever was right – and since the employer was generous, they ended up receiving one penny, even though they did not work for the whole day. They were treated with grace, and they are an example of the principle through which God still saves people today (Ephesians 2:8).

GRACE CAN BE FRUSTRATED (Galatians 2:21)

People sometimes say, “If I am going to go to heaven, I am going to have to contribute something, and do it myself.” But this thinking makes grace *useless*. If we could get to heaven by our own goodness, efforts and law-keeping, we are able to *purchase* heaven and it would be silly for God to give it to us for free! Also, it is then a complete waste for Jesus Christ to come and *die* so we could have a way to heaven. It must either be by grace OR by works, which humans find so hard to accept. See Romans 4:4-5.

GRACE HAS APPEARED (Titus 2:11; Hebrews 2:9)

When the Lord Jesus came into the world, grace was finally appearing in its fullest sense. His life was a life of grace (giving grace to people), and His words were very gracious (Luke 4:22). But most importantly, His death for the sins of the world was the way in which He brought the grace (gift) of salvation to the human beings.

CAN GRACE BE ABUSED? (Romans 6:1-2)

Some people say that if I can be sure that I am accepted with God and have all my sins forgiven, wouldn’t that make me want to just go on sinning? But this is a misunderstanding of grace. Grace changes a person’s heart so that they will not *want* to sin. A true Christian loves the Lord Jesus (after all, He has died for them!), and they do not want to do what is wrong – they will make mistakes, but their life will be changed because their heart has changed.

STANDING IN GRACE (Romans 5:2)

Grace gives us a way of standing up before God. We don’t have to be afraid of falling down. The law condemns us, but God has found a way out for us. He will give grace to the sinners who repent and trust the Lord Jesus Christ.

GRACE SHOULD BE RECEIVED

Grace must be received/taken, just like any gift that is offered to you. Will you take it?

