



From The Desk of Brother Hayes

Greetings Friends! As I sit in my office thinking about my message for this month I thought, considering the chaotic time we find ourselves in what would be the best message for the people?

One thing for sure is our lives will be forever changed because of this horrible virus pandemic. No doubt some of you have lost someone very close to you. Others may have felt betrayed by their ministers believing they were so blessed that they would not have to face tribulations. You may have said, "This shouldn't be happening to us!" Some of you have been fearful discovering you didn't have the faith you thought you had. Sadly, there are others that lost all hope and committed suicide.

And then we have the searchers questioning the source of the epidemic reasoning whether it came from God or the devil? Others are entertaining the many conspiracy theories found across the internet. Well, I could throw my theory in also, but that would only add to the confusion! Mine would just be another theory. Of course it may have originated the way it was reported by the Chinese government. Honestly, all of us can speculate, but we simply don't know. One thing for sure, God is fully aware of all that happens on planet earth. Remember, He has All Power in Heaven and in the earth!

The sobering fact is we have been changed by this pandemic and how our nation and the world reacted to it!

Knowing this, what message should be conveyed? Perhaps the people should be reminded of the end time and the Antichrist? With everything we have witnessed throughout the world and have recently experienced, I'm sure most everyone would agree we are at the very end of the ages. Although we could be on the verge of the consummation, I believe our emphases should be on God and His Amazing Grace!

There is nothing you can do about the fulfilling of the scriptures. Acts chapter three, verses twenty and twenty-one declares, *"And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began."* It cannot be stopped! The end will come!

I say again, "God Grace" is the message that must be declared to the people. Grace is our only hope!

The message this month is "Amazing Grace". It is an article I wrote back in 2013. I felt I should remind each of you that it is by His Grace that we will be saved and nothing else. What would God have His people do? The answer of course is "Trust Him with all your heart"!

Only His Grace will preserve us during these perilous times. Keep your eyes on the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. *"Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord"* [2Peter 1:2].

Amazing Grace

By: Phillip Hayes

Many people including Christians have a distorted perception of God. For instance, many think the God of the Old Testament is a mean, angry God of judgment ready to destroy anyone that comes up short of His standards. On the other hand, many think the God revealed in the New Testament loves everybody and wants the world to be saved.

I realize volumes could be written on the subject and this small article could never reveal the fullness of the message of Grace. However, I hope what I write will help the reader to fully appreciate God's Marvelous Grace.

Grace is mentioned 39 times in the Old Testament and 131 times in the New. The word translated Grace in the Old Testament is from the Hebrew word *chên* which means, kindness, favor; well favored. The word translated Grace in the New Testament is from the Greek word *charis* which means, *graciousness* (as *gratifying*), of manner or act (abstract or concrete; literal, figurative or spiritual; especially the divine influence upon the heart, and its reflection in the life; including *gratitude*): - acceptable, benefit, favour, gift, grace.

Most Bible teachers would define Grace as the unmerited (unearned and underserved) favor of God. I want to prove with the scripture that God has never changed! The God of the Old and New Testaments is the same.

Let's begin in the Old Testament. Although there are many, many instances of God's Grace and mercy throughout

the Old Testament, I will only use one that will prove His Grace is indeed amazing.

And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that David his father did. He removed the high places, and brake the images, and cut down the groves, and brake in pieces the brasen serpent that Moses had made: for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it: and he called it Nehushtan (a thing of brass). He trusted in the LORD God of Israel; so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor any that were before him. For he clave to the LORD, and departed not from following him, but kept his commandments, which the LORD commanded Moses. [2Kings 18:3-6]

This wonderful tribute was made to King Hezekiah. It is striking because he is revered above all the kings of Israel that were before or after him! That my friends would include David and Solomon! The scripture went on to say in verse 7, *"And the LORD was with him; and he prospered whithersoever he went."* King Hezekiah was a man that truly loved God and defended His ways throughout his reign.

You would think such a man would leave an heir that would continue his commitment to God. However, this was not the case.

Hezekiah had a son who was destined to be heir to the throne of Israel. When Hezekiah died his son was only twelve years old. At that tender age he began to reign as king over Israel. It is so shocking that it seems unbelievable what this holy man's son did!

Manasseh was twelve years old when he began to reign, and reigned fifty and five years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Hephzibah. And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, after the abominations of the heathen, whom the LORD cast out before the children of Israel. For he built up again the high places which Hezekiah his father

had destroyed; and he reared up altars for Baal, and made a grove, as did Ahab king of Israel; and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served them. And he built altars in the house of the LORD, of which the LORD said, In Jerusalem will I put my name. And he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the LORD. And he made his son pass through the fire, and observed times, and used enchantments, and dealt with familiar spirits and wizards: he wrought much wickedness in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger. And he set a graven image of the grove that he had made in the house, of which the LORD said to David, and to Solomon his son, In this house, and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all tribes of Israel, will I put my name for ever: Neither will I make the feet of Israel move any more out of the land which I gave their fathers; only if they will observe to do according to all that I have commanded them, and according to all the law that my servant Moses commanded them. But they hearkened not: and Manasseh seduced them to do more evil than did the nations whom the LORD destroyed before the children of Israel. Moreover Manasseh shed innocent blood very much, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another; beside his sin wherewith he made Judah to sin, in doing that which was evil in the sight of the LORD. [2Kings 21:1-9;16]

It is unbelievable that a man who had such a wonderful man of God as a father would do such evil. I don't know if you could compare Hitler to his man Manasseh. He is the very icon of evil! In my opinion, you just couldn't get any more evil.

Ancient Jewish history states that Manasseh was so evil that he caused his own children to "pass through the fire". Their history defined this as human sacrifice. He actually forced his own children to be burned alive to appease false gods. He worshipped idols and was heavily

involved in witchcraft. He caused Israel to do more evil than the nations they had previously destroyed.

Isaiah the prophet lived during the reign of Hezekiah and Manasseh. You may remember that Isaiah was the prophet that told King Hezekiah he would die. But Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and God sent Isaiah back and God gave him fifteen more years of life. Think about this, God loved Hezekiah so much that He allowed Isaiah the prophet to command the sun to go backward 10 degrees as a sign to Hezekiah that God was with him. God used Isaiah to stop the whole universe and reversed it for one man!!

Jewish writings reveal that Manasseh hated Isaiah the prophet. He wanted Isaiah dead! It is written that Manasseh had men hunting for Isaiah. Isaiah had hidden himself in a log deep within the woods. They found him there. King Manasseh ordered the men to saw him in half while in the log. Now we know one that was sawn asunder as recorded in Hebrews 11:37.

Second Chronicles also records his evil and notes that God spoke to him and to the people but they would not listen to God (2Chr. 33:10). In his 55 year reign he destroyed everything his father Hezekiah stood for.

What would you do with a man like this? What would I do? I must admit, as I write about this miserable evil excuse for a human being, I want him to experience all the pain and suffering he has brought to his people.

I don't know if Manasseh sexually molested children or not, but he probably did. As far as I can see nothing seemed to stop him from doing the most horrible atrocities you could think of. This man deserved death if any man has ever deserved death!

Yes, we have evil men and women around us today. Horrible individuals that do great injustices to innocent people. Raping, mutilating and actually eating body parts. Not long ago the news reported a woman had put her baby

in a dryer at a laundry mat to punish it. A man was so angry at his little baby because it was crying that he put the child in a microwave oven. What punishment is just for such evil? I know, you are probably feeling what I am. You would like to cram that guy into a huge microwave and fry him!

But wait, we're supposed to be talking about the Grace of God! As I said before God spoke to Manasseh and the people while all these atrocities were being done. He was demonstrating His Grace by giving them a chance to repent, but they wouldn't. *"And the LORD spake to Manasseh, and to his people: but they would not hearken."* [2Chronicles 33:10]

I want you to understand, all of the evil Manasseh and the people of Israel did was over a period of many years. God was patient and gave them opportunity to repent. They had a choice just as we have a choice today.

When they refused to harken, there was only one thing left for God to do. He turned them over to their enemies!

"Wherefore the LORD brought upon them the captains of the host of the king of Assyria, which took Manasseh among the thorns, and bound him with fetters, and carried him to Babylon." [2Chronicles 33:11]

When I read this verse I want to shout, "Praise God"! Manasseh in thorns bound with fetters, and carried to Babylon. What a wonderful sight that would have been. Now, he's going to get what he deserves!

But Manasseh did what many of us have done. He prayed to God for forgiveness. Read now about our God's Amazing Grace: *"And when he was in affliction, he besought the LORD his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers, And prayed unto him: and he was intreated of him, and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom. Then*

Manasseh knew that the LORD he was God. [2Chronicles 33:12-13]

Can you believe God would forgive such a man, and not only forgive him, but restore him to his kingdom? God is that good! There is no sin too ugly, too horrible, too disgusting that He won't forgive! *(I should put my critics on notice here that I am aware Jesus said blasphemy against the Holy Ghost would not be forgiven, see Mat. 12:31-32).*

I want you to see a great truth. You can see how God's Grace was extended to a man as evil as Manasseh. This was done under the Law in which he refused to try to keep, and also apparently despised. How much more powerful is Grace offered through the Blood Sacrifice of God's only Son! Here is the most powerful scriptures in all the Bible: *"That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved."* [John 3:15-17]

I know God's Grace saved Manasseh. You see Grace is like Faith, it will always produce works. Manasseh knew that the Lord was God because of His goodness, not because of His judgment. It was the goodness of God that lead him to repentance, just as it is the goodness of God that leads you to repentance (Rom. 2:4).

Read what Manasseh did because of the Grace God had given him: *"Now after this he built a wall without the city of David, on the west side of Gihon, in the valley, even to the entering in at the fish gate, and compassed about Ophel, and raised it up a very great height, and put captains of war in all the fenced cities of Judah. And he took away the strange gods, and the idol out of the house of the LORD, and all the altars that he had built in the mount of the house*

of the LORD, and in Jerusalem, and cast them out of the city. And he repaired the altar of the LORD, and sacrificed thereon peace offerings and thank offerings, and commanded Judah to serve the LORD God of Israel. Nevertheless the people did sacrifice still in the high places, yet unto the LORD their God only.” [2Chronicles 33:14-17]

This is what Grace will do. It will turn a monster into a child of the Living God! His heart was changed by God’s Amazing grace! I believe Manasseh was truly repentant of all that he had done and he tried to restore what he had destroyed.

Yes, Grace changes people. The Blood of Jesus releases Grace, and it doesn’t cover up your sins, it takes away your sins!

I read where someone had asked a question similar to this, “Will Grace allow me to continue in my sin of homosexuality and still be saved? On another occasion, someone asked my wife, “Is smoking a sin, or a weight?”

I really hate to be rude, but both these kind of questions are just plain stupid and I usually avoid them (2Tim. 2:23). But I want to make this point.

I know you might think there is no comparison to these two questions, but they are very comparable. How do they compare? The questions are asked for the same reason. People that ask these kinds of questions are wanting to know what they can get by with, and still go to heaven. Each wants someone to justify them doing something they know is wrong.

Let’s address the first question first: Grace cannot allow anything that Graces teaches against. *“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.” [Titus 2:11-12]* There is no way that I can do more justice to this verse than it is written. The answer to

question one according to Titus is a resounding, No! I could of course give dozens of other scriptures.

Now, let's look at that second question. Smoking, a sin, or a weight; which one? Doesn't really matter because Paul said to lay them both aside! ". . . *let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.*" [Hebrews 12:1]

Lately I have been emphasizing Faith and Grace in my meetings and articles. I preach and firmly believe that if you are born again, you are in Grace, and you are saved! I would never deny this, for if I did, I would be denying the record that God has given of His Son! *"He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son."* [1John 5:10-11] Notice, God hath given to us. Hath given is *past tenses*! If you are born again, God has already given you eternal life. Eternal life is not something you are working for, it is the free gift of God. You have the witness in yourself! This is the record of God. You've got it!

How this could ever be an issue with folks is beyond me. Either you are saved, or you are not! You can't save yourself with your own works of righteousness. If you could Jesus suffered and died in vain!

Surprisingly, the more I stress Grace, the more questions people ask. It's like people that profess to be born again and Spirit filled can't believe they are saved? I mean, how dumb can you be! For instance, some have asked, "Are you preaching, "once in grace, always in grace" or "once saved, always saved"?"

This has surprised me and use to offend me. This doctrine they are asking about, (as far as I can understand it) basically teaches that once a person responds to the

Gospel by coming forward and repeating the "sinners prayer", is saved no matter if their life style changes or not. They believe this "saved" person is a sinner, and will always remain a sinner. The only difference in this person and the rest of the sinners, is they are saved by Grace and going to heaven, no matter how they live. The idea is that Grace covers all your sins forever, and if you lived a life of sin and ungodliness it would not prevent you from being saved. In other words, you are saved without any change in your morals. You could remain a pervert, a pedophile, an adulterer, a thief, a murderer, a drunk and still go to heaven because one day you "got saved". So, if this is the doctrine they are asking about, you can see why I would be offended.

However, I am no longer offended when accused or questioned about my teaching on Grace. Actually, I am blessed and get excited when someone asks! Why? Because I find myself in very good company! I find myself shoulder to shoulder with the great Apostle Paul who was questioned relentlessly about his position and teaching on Grace. Praise God!

The Apostle Paul had many enemies. His greatest enemy was his own people, the Jews. His epistle to the Galatians is a real eye opener as to how he viewed the Jews religion which is called Judaism today.

Apparently they began teaching the Galatian church that they had to keep the Old Testament laws, Sabbaths and feast days. It is obvious by the following two verses that they Judged Paul to be a sinner, and that he preached that the people should do evil that good would come. There is little doubt they were referring to Paul's message of Grace. *"For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory; why yet am I also judged as a sinner? And not rather, (as we be slanderously reported, and as some*

affirm that we say,) Let us do evil, that good may come? whose damnation is just. [Romans 3:7-8]

Paul stood steadfast against these teachers of the law! He said, *"I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain."* [Galatians 2:21] Keeping the law, any law cannot save you! The carnal mind cannot accept this and desires to save itself by the keeping of laws, rules and standards of men.

This is why it is so troubling when I see articles of Judaism in Christian churches such as "prayer shawls" and "a shofar". If you believe the purpose of blowing a Ram's horn before a church service is to bring the Spirit of God into the service, you are greatly deceived! Why? Because God's Spirit lives in His people! He is already there, if it is a Christian church with Christians in it! You don't blow a horn to bring the Spirit down from heaven somewhere. It's just stupid!

In his epistle to Rome, Paul wrote: *"Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law."* [Romans 3:28]

I especially love this verse in Second Timothy. *"Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began."* [2Timothy 1:9] It should be obvious, people who are already saved, cannot do anything in order to be saved, since they are already saved. Got it?!

Bill Humberd, a dear friend and brother in the Lord gave me a document that I had written back in 1972. He had kept it all these years! If I remember correctly, he said this is one of the first things I had written. It said: "I don't live the life I live to be saved, I live the life I live because I am saved."

Thank you Lord for Your Amazing Grace!

WHAT REALLY DEFINES YOU

We were the only family with children in the restaurant. I sat Erik in a high chair and noticed everyone was quietly sitting and talking. Suddenly, Erik squealed with glee and said, 'Hi.' He pounded his fat baby hands on the high chair tray. His eyes were crinkled in laughter and his mouth was bared in a toothless grin, as he wriggled and giggled with merriment.

I looked around and saw the source of his merriment. It was a man whose pants were baggy with a zipper at half-mast and his toes poked out of would-be shoes. His shirt was dirty and his hair was uncombed and unwashed. His whiskers were too short to be called a beard and his nose was so varicose it looked like a road map.

We were too far from him to smell, but I was sure he smelled.. His hands waved and flapped on loose wrists.. 'Hi there, baby; hi there, big boy. I see ya, buster,' the man said to Erik.

My husband and I exchanged looks, 'What do we do?' Erik continued to laugh and answer, 'Hi.'

Everyone in the restaurant noticed and looked at us and then at the man. The old geezer was creating a nuisance with my beautiful baby. Our meal came and the man began shouting from across the room, 'Do ya patty cake? Do you know peek-a-boo? Hey, look, he knows peek- a-boo.'

Nobody thought the old man was cute. He was obviously drunk.

My husband and I were embarrassed. We ate in silence; all except for Erik, who was running through his repertoire for the admiring skid-row bum, who in turn, reciprocated with his cute comments.

We finally got through the meal and headed for the door. My husband went to pay the check and told me to meet him in the parking lot. The old man sat poised between me and the door. 'Lord, just let me out of here before he speaks to me or Erik,' I prayed. As I drew closer to the man, I turned my back trying to sidestep him and avoid any air he might be breathing. As I did, Erik leaned over my arm, reaching with both arms in a baby's

'pick-me-up' position. Before I could stop him, Erik had propelled himself from my arms to the man.

Suddenly a very old smelly man and a very young baby consummated their love and kinship. Erik in an act of total trust, love, and submission laid his tiny head upon the man's ragged shoulder. The man's eyes closed, and I saw tears hover beneath his lashes. His aged hands full of grime, pain, and hard labor, cradled my baby's bottom and stroked his back. No two beings have ever loved so deeply for so short a time.

I stood awestruck. The old man rocked and cradled Erik in his arms and his eyes opened and set squarely on mine. He said in a firm commanding voice, 'You take care of this baby.'

Somehow I managed, 'I will,' from a throat that contained a stone.

He pried Erik from his chest, lovingly and longingly, as though he were in pain. I received my baby, and the man said, 'God bless you, ma'am, you've given me my Christmas gift.'

I said nothing more than a muttered thanks. With Erik in my arms, I ran for the car. My husband was wondering why I was crying and holding Erik so tightly, and why I was saying, 'My God, my God, forgive me.'

I had just witnessed Christ's love shown through the innocence of a tiny child who saw no sin, who made no judgment; a child who saw a soul, and a mother who saw a suit of clothes. I was a Christian who was blind, holding a child who was not.. I felt it was God asking, 'Are you willing to share your son for a moment?' when He shared His for all eternity. How did God feel when he put his baby in our arms 2000 years ago.

The ragged old man, unwittingly, had reminded me, 'To enter the Kingdom of God , we must become as little children.'

If this has blessed you, please bless others by passing it on. Sometimes, it takes a child to remind us of what is really important. We must always remember who we are, where we came from and, most importantly, how we feel about others. The clothes on your back or the car that you drive or the house that you live in does not define you at all; it is how you treat your fellow man that identifies who you are.

-Author Unknown