

GOD'S TRUE GRACE IN TITUS 2:11-14

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Titus 2:11-14 says, "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; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." This passage strongly teaches the truth about the grace of God and effectively refutes the false doctrines about God's grace that are so prevalent in the religious world (including our own brotherhood) today.

One true gospel of Christ

We are promised by the Lord to have false teachers in the churches of Christ, who will end up with many followers: "But there were false prophets also among the people, *even as there shall be false teachers among you*, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. *And many shall follow their pernicious ways*; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of" (2 Pet 2:1-3). In Paul's time, there were already false teachers in the brotherhood, preaching "another Jesus," "another Spirit," and "another gospel," which were threatening to corrupt the minds of the Corinthian brethren (2 Cor 11:3-4). The Galatian brethren were also being "removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: *which is not another*; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ" (Gal 1:6-7). A curse was then pronounced by God upon all false teachers: "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed" (Gal 1:8-9). When Paul states that these "other gospels" are "not another," he is affirming the fact that there is only one *true* gospel of Christ. Ephesians 4:4-6 declares, "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."

True grace versus false grace

Since there is only "one gospel" and "one faith," there is also only one true grace of God that is part of that one gospel and one faith. In 1 Peter 5:12, the divinely inspired Apostle Peter says, "I have written briefly, exhorting, and testifying that this is *the true grace of God* wherein ye stand." This informs us that there is a *true* grace of God, which also implies that there also exists in

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this world false teaching about the grace of God. Indeed, Jude 1:4 plainly warns that “there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, *turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness*, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.” “Lasciviousness” means *licentiousness*, and “licentiousness” is defined as “lacking legal or moral restraints.” That is precisely where anyone who follows false teaching about God’s grace will end up. Romans 6:1-2 addresses the ramifications of false teaching about the grace of God: “What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?” An example of this is the common but very false idea that man is saved by God’s grace *alone*.

Titus 2:11-14 and “grace only”

Titus 2:11 says that God’s grace has appeared unto *all men*. If salvation is by grace only, then there would be universal salvation. But God says that only a few will be saved (Matt 7:13-14; Luke 13:23-24). Titus 2:11 also says that God’s grace *brings* salvation, not that it *is* salvation. God loves every soul which He has made (Jonah 4:10-11). Therefore, God does not desire to see even one soul perish eternally, but wants all to repent and be saved (Ezek 18:23,32; 1 Tim 2:4; 2 Pet 3:9). Thus, God provided Jesus Christ His Son for the sins of the whole world that all men would have the opportunity to be saved (John 3:16; 1 John 2:2). This giving of His only Son out of His love for the world is the manner in which His grace has appeared to all men. His grace has brought the opportunity and the means for all men to be saved. But there are conditions for that salvation. Grace brings the salvation, but is not salvation all by itself. Finally, in Titus 2:12-14 God’s grace actually teaches conditions which must be met in order for the salvation that grace has brought to be obtained. Men may falsely teach that salvation comes by grace alone, but the Lord says that grace itself teaches that there are other conditions for salvation. Men must deny ungodliness and worldly lusts and must live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world in order to be saved. Those are conditions. We are saved by grace, but *through* faith (Eph 2:8), which must be a *living* faith (Jas 2:14-26), meaning that we must meet God’s conditions for salvation by obedience (Heb 5:9). Any teaching about God’s grace that differs from this is a departure from the truth, and turns God’s grace into lasciviousness, removing the legal and moral restraints that God’s truth places upon mankind. The rotten fruit from the corrupt tree of grace that does not require obedience to God is all around us in our world today (Matt 7:15-20; Luke 6:43-44).