



GRACE-LOVE-TRUTH COURSE.

PART 1B: THE GRACE WAY TO USE SCRIPTURE.

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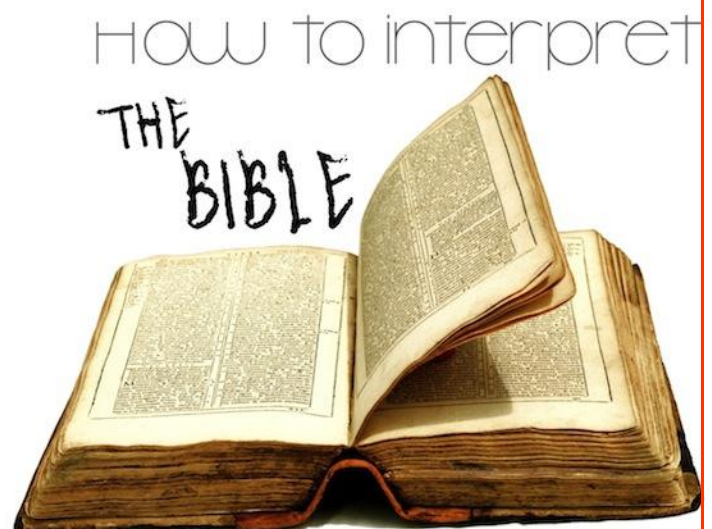
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4. THE SCRIPTURES

An important aspect of understanding the grace that is ours through the living Word, Jesus Christ, is that grace is based on firm biblical and historical foundation. Grace is not some new doctrine or revelation, grace is and always has been, the foundation of the gospel. When we have strong biblical foundations then the intimacy, hope and blessings that come through Jesus and his grace cannot be undermined. As you go through this study course please spend time looking up all the scriptural references quoted in brackets and allow the Holy Spirit to establish the Word in your heart and mind. As you go through each part, at first, there may be unanswered questions that arise. Many of these will be answered as the course progresses, so hang in there. If by the end of the course you feel any question has not been answered sufficiently please spend time in prayer and the Scriptures

asking the Holy Spirit for revelation. You may also email us at study@gracelovetruth.com if you still feel clarification is needed and we will endeavour to help.

Scripture is the Holy Spirit's progressive revelation of Jesus' gospel of grace and His kingdom. This gospel is found in shadows and types throughout all the Old Testament scriptures. If we accept the fact that the ultimate purpose of all Scripture is to reveal Jesus Christ (Jn5:39), His righteousness, His salvation, His grace and His kingdom, it will affect the way we read and interpret Scripture. The purpose of this lesson is to clarify the way the early church would have use and understood the Scriptures and how we need to have a similar understanding so that we can fully delve the truths of Jesus and grace.

4.1 PRINCIPLES OF BIBLE READING

John 3:3 Jesus replied, "Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again."

These are some of the principles we will be applying when reading Scriptures:

We believe that all Scripture (The Bible) is from God and in its original language, is without error. It has spiritual authority and power. It is alive and active for each new day. It reveals spiritual truth about the spiritual kingdom of God and therefore can only be truly understood in its fullness through the revelation of the Holy Spirit to "born again" believers. To correctly interpret any scripture;



1. Scripture is used to interpret scripture.
2. The principle of first mention is helpful i.e. the first time something is mentioned will shed light on all subsequent mentions.
3. Scripture, especially the Old Testament, is highly symbolic, poetic and prophetic. The Jews would have picked up on these nuances and hidden meanings which form a thread through their generations and history. Sadly some of these are lost in translation.
4. Every word found in the scriptures is there for a reason and has a meaning. Numbers have meanings, animals have meaning, and names have meanings and purpose. Knowing these meanings sheds light on what God is trying to reveal or teach us about His plan of salvation. Here are a few suggested examples: The name Job means hated, Sarah means grace, Isaac means laughter. Lambs; generally represent Jesus the atoning sacrifice of God. Blood; is pointing to Jesus blood sacrifice for our sins. Flour; is pointing to Jesus body crushed for our healing. Sweat; is pointing to man's self effort, good works and self righteousness. Thorns; is pointing to the Law of sin and death and the curse of the fall. Mountains; spiritual kingdoms. Gold; God's glory. 5 = divine grace. 6= man (and his fall). 7= perfection or rest, etc, etc.
4. The Scriptures reveal one of the core underlying themes since the fall of man; God dependant righteousness (Ro.3:21). This type of righteousness pleases God because it's source and focus is His Son, Jesus Christ. Opposed to this is man's independent self righteousness, which we will show God hates because its source and focus is man, man's will and man's own ability (more on this important truth in part 5).
5. Because of God's different covenants (agreements) not all Scripture applies directly to born again believers. However, all Scripture is valid, important, useful and insightful (we will look at covenants in part 2).
6. The New Testament is a fulfilment of the Old Testament and it is directly linked and does not stand on its own.

7. Jesus acted in a specific ways so as to fulfil the Old Testament Scriptures.
8. The mindset with which we approach Scripture affects what we are able to receive from Scriptures. To those who seek Law, it teaches Law, to those who desire grace, it reveals Jesus as grace. It depends on what glasses one decides to wear.

4.2 THE EIGHT C'S

There are many varying opinions on the way to use the Bible. Applying the following eight "C" points can be a helpful way to gain revelation and understanding of any scripture, especially in the context Jesus' grace:

Christ: How does it reveal and point to Jesus as Lord and Saviour and our intimate relationship with him?

The Cross: What does it say or imply about the finished work of the cross?

The Context: Who and what issues was it originally addressing? Have we read the whole message . What is the context?

The Covenant: Which covenant applies to this scripture, Law or Grace?

Citizenship: What does it say about the kingdom of God, our citizenship thereof and the Holy Spirits leading?

The New Creation: How does it point to the new creation - the born again believer?

The Church: What is it telling us about God's people - the church and fellowship?

God's Children: What does it say about the children of "Abba" God?

4.3 THE SCRIPTURES REVEAL JESUS

Jesus is the living Word and Scripture is the revelation of the Word (Greek: logos), who is Jesus. The Bible is not a rule book, but the revelation of Christ. It reveals God's plan to save mankind through Jesus. The Scriptures cannot save anyone, only Jesus can.

John 1:1 – "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

John 5:39 – "You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me."

Luke 24:27 – "And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself."

Acts 18:28 – "For he vigorously refuted the Jews in public debate, proving from the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ."

2 Timothy 3:15 - "And how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness."

Mark 14:49 – "Every day I was with you, teaching in the temple courts, and you did not arrest me. But the Scriptures must be fulfilled."



4.4 TWO WAYS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

Rom 3:21 But now apart from the law the righteousness of God has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify.

A foundational theme of all Scripture is that there are basically two systems of "getting right" with God. One works and the other fails! (More on this in part 5).

1. Self righteousness through the knowledge of good and bad: Good works and religious Law keeping by self effort. Self dependant righteousness.
2. God's gift of righteousness through revelation and faith in his Saviour, Jesus Christ: God dependant righteousness.

4.5 GOD'S GIFTS OF GRACE

The New Testament Scriptures reveal the fulfilment of God's promises. Through the grace of Jesus God has pour out gifts upon us his children by the Holy Spirit, to empower us to be his representatives and ambassadors in this age through the gifts of.....

- Jesus and his life
- Unconditional love and acceptance
- Salvation and eternal life
- The Holy Spirit
- The power of the Spirit
- Righteousness
- Holiness
- Forgiveness
- A new nature
- The gifts of the Spirit: Tongues, interpreting tongues, prophecy, words of wisdom, words of knowledge, healings, discerning spirits, faith, working miracles.
- Sonship (we are children of God)
- Citizenship in the kingdom of God
- The fruits of the Spirit: Love, joy, peace, kindness, gentleness, perseverance, self control, goodness, faithfulness
- Health and prosperity
- The Church

As we go through this course you will see why you are qualified in every way, through the grace of Jesus, to receive everyone of these gifts in full and abundant measure. Blessed to be a blessing!



5. SCRIPTURE IN THE CONTEXT OF GRACE

John 1:17 – "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ."

This Scripture clarifies the context in which born again believers seek to understand the God.

Scriptures are often quoted out of context. When this happens, a scripture can take on a totally different meaning to its original intended use. As the saying goes, "A scripture taken out of context is a con." A very important principle is that the context of a scripture is essential to correct understanding of that scripture.

For instance; Jesus said in Matthew 5:29-30, "If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away... and if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away." We all know that there is no way Jesus



expected us to literally apply this, otherwise we would be a church of blind, one handed people. However when taken out of context some may justify doing exactly as he said. However, taken in the context of the whole teaching which starts in Matthew 5:1 and ends in Matthew 7:28, we see that the actual issue was the self righteousness and hypocrisy of the religious Jews and that the keeping of the Mosaic Law could not make one righteous enough in God's eyes because at it's root righteousness is a heart issue and not a behaviour issue.

5.1 THE CONTEXT OF DIVISION IN THE EARLY CHURCH

To correctly understand some of the most important parts of the New Testament and to root ourselves in the New Covenant and the Gospel of Grace (Acts 20:24), we need to understand the major issues that Jesus was addressing through Paul i.e. what was the context of Paul's letters?

One of the major issues of Paul's day was the division and conflict within the churches between Christians from a Jewish background and Christians from a gentile pagan background. Peter and James fell into the trap of promoting divisions over the Law of Moses, and Paul rebuked them for it (Gal.2:11).

"So what?" you may say, "I don't have any religious Jews in my church." That may be true, but this basic issue about Law or grace is still evident today among all Christians. It affects the way we read the Scriptures, the personal way we understand the gospel and how we live out "The Gospel of Grace" in love and faith.

5.2 LAW KEEPERS AND GRACE BELIEVERS



The conflict between these two groups, Jews and Gentiles, arose because:

1. The Christians from a Jewish background believed that they were more godly and holy because they and their families had supposedly kept God's Law for generations (Ro.2:17). They believed that their Jewish culture had refined them and made them a holy people. They believed that they came into the church with a holy advantage, a holy credit, earned by their family's generational good works in keeping the Law of Moses.
2. Sadly these Jewish Christians looked down on, and judged Christians with a Greek/Roman culture because this culture was idolatrous and prone to be sexually immoral. Admittedly many of the Greek believers were not yet fully free from the "free love" that their culture permitted, so in Jewish eyes this made them second class Christians. However the irony was that the Jewish believers secretly did the same things! (Ro.2:23-24).
3. The Jewish Christians believed the gentile Christians needed a good dose of The Law of Moses to get their lives right. After all they claimed "It worked for us Jews"; which in fact it didn't.
4. Intrinsically these judgmental Jewish Christians did not believe that God's grace and the Holy Spirit in gentile Christians was enough for their sanctification and transformation. so they taught that the Law was needed in addition to being saved by the grace of Jesus Christ.

5. They judged the gentile Christians harshly and told them that only The Law of Moses could control their immoral lives.

This self righteous and judgmental attitude of the Jewish Christians and their call to implement the Mosaic Law to curb gentile sin was found throughout the church, in Rome (Ro.4:13-15), Galatia (Gal.3:1-5), Corinth and Ephesus. This judgmental attitude obviously caused great hurt, anger and division in the churches.

It was these compounded errors that Paul's letters address:

- i) Holiness and righteousness is by the grace of Jesus Christ alone (1Co.1:30).
- ii) The keeping of laws imposed on us by others no longer has a place in the Christian life (Ro.6:14).
- iii) We are now led by God's Spirit and God's Word which lives in us. Not by rules, church canons, regulations and laws (Gal.2:20)

The interesting thing that has been missed by many is that Paul points out to both the Jews and the Jewish Christians that their godly inheritance and history was actually far from holy. Even though their ancestors knew and heard God (unlike the pagan nations) they still chose to worship idols and engage in sexual immorality right under God's nose, even on the day the Law of Moses was given at Mount Sinai (Reading the books of Judges and Kings confirms their ongoing sin). If you wish to look deeper into the depth of depravity and godlessness of Israel and what God was feeling, also read Ezek.23:14-21, but be warned its X rated stuff.



Paul rebukes the Jewish Christians in Romans 1:21-25, because of their sins listed in Jeremiah 32:34, Ezekiel 8:10, Judges 19:22, Exodus 32:1-6. Basically Paul says, "How dare you judge the gentiles who didn't know God, when you and your forefathers, who did know God, chose to do the very same things. So much for Israel's Law-keeping, you unholy, self-righteous hypocrites!" (Jesus had similar strong words for the Jewish religious teachers of the day).

So to conclude: When we read the Bible let us read and seek revelation through the lenses of grace, not with the lenses of the Law. Let them reveal Jesus, the New Covenant and the Kingdom of God.

5.3. A SCRIPTURAL EXERCISE

Before the second meeting, read through and meditate on the following scriptures. Consider them in the context of the above teaching and answer the questions.

Act 15:11. We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are."

Romans 3:23, "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus."

Romans 4:16, "Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham's offspring—not only to those who are of the law but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all."

The issue of Jewish superiority and hypocrisy: What was it?: How do you think it affected church life, their ability to rest in God's grace and advance the God's kingdom? In today's church context are there similar issues and attitudes? What do these Scriptures teach us in relation to grace, fellowship and the preaching of the gospel today?

5.4 QUESTIONS

Answer the following questions.

Comment on legalistic religion.

What are some of the principles that can be applied when reading scripture?

What claims did Jesus make about the scriptures?

Explain some of the divisions in the early church and their causes.

What did Jesus say about hypocrisy?

What are dead works?

What is grace?

How do we received grace?

Explain the Greek word, "sozo".

When and how did Paul get the gospel?

What is the main theme of Galatians 1 &2?

What is the good news?

How did part 1 help you, how can it be improved?



Now that we have established a Biblical understanding of the grace, in part 2 we will look at the New Covenant agreement that God, our loving, heavenly "Abba" Father, has made that guarantees us his blessing and grace through Jesus Christ.