

**The Grand Theme of God's Grace –  
The history of Redemption continues**

**But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.** Genesis 6:8 (KJV)

**Grace Greater Than All My Sins**

*Marvelous grace of our loving Lord, Grace that exceeds our sin and our guilt  
Yonder on Calvary's mount outpoured, There where the blood of the Lamb was spilt.*

*Sin and despair, like the sea-waves cold, Threaten the soul with infinite loss;  
Grace that is greater, yes, grace untold Points to the refuge, the mighty cross.*

*Dark is the stain that we cannot hide, What can avail to wash it away?  
Look! There is flowing a crimson tide; Whiter than snow you may be today.*

*Marvelous, infinite, matchless grace, Freely bestowed on all who believe  
All who are longing to see His face, Will you this moment His grace receive?*

*Refrain:*

*Grace, grace, God's grace, Grace that will pardon and cleanse within;  
Grace, grace, God's grace, Grace that is greater than all our sins.*

Oh what a wonderful theme – one that bears repeating again and again. I never cease to enjoy singing this glorious hymn. Noah lived during a time when JEHOVAH, the Bible says, regretted that He had created man.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>11</sup> **The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence.** <sup>12</sup> **And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth.** Genesis 6:11-12 (KJV)

It would appear to the vast majority of earth's inhabitants that Redemptive history had ground to a halt at this time but such was not the case. Remember a previous lesson where we discussed God's dealing with man in the big overview of how He sets up nations and directs history so that man can "grope" and through the action of the Holy Spirit bring men to Himself?<sup>2</sup> Well, this whole historical context had ground to a halt. Satan in his frenzied attempt to cut off man from God's redemption had almost succeeded in his plan but there was a footnote – there was there was a man – Noah. What an amazing footnote this was. Our passage says that Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD. The phrase of a person "finding grace of another's eyes" is repeated throughout the Word of God and bears careful study for in this study we will see instrument of God's redemption.

**Word study of Grace (chen)**

**chen**, pronounced cain, is a complex word. It appears 14 times in Genesis and as a result of this kindly, generous disposition by God men are greatly blessed. It is associated with the eyes for good reason. The eyes show the kindly disposition quite readily. But the smile of the eyes are what is behind what is referred to in these texts. When associated with God it is, of course, used anthropomorphically to show that God favors a man. This favor is illustrated in human relationships between men in God's Word. Joseph found grace in the eyes of his master Potiphar and as a result was given responsibilities and privileges not normally bestowed on slaves ([Gen 39:4](#)). Esther found grace in the eyes of her husband King Ahasuerus. As a result, she was crowned queen over another ([Esther 2:17](#)). She was able to enter the court without proper protocol without fear of death ([Esther 5:1-3](#)).

Favor denotes a good relationship between (in Noah's case) God and a man. It is extended

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by God as His natural predisposition. In the case of Noah, he was the only man left on the face of the earth who had a good relationship with God. To suggest that God selected Noah 'out of the blue' for favor is nonsense. Genesis 4:26 says that men began calling upon the name of the LORD.<sup>3</sup> As a result of this man could walk with the LORD because He had grace upon them. The problem during Noah's time was that all men *except Noah* had abandoned this practice. So it was not an arbitrary thing that God did – it was His predisposition to call men to Himself and to grant to them grace – *chen*. Note in Genesis 6:3 that the Spirit of God was striving (contending as NIV correctly translates). God has always been calling men to Himself through out the ages but it had come to the tragic point that NO ONE except Noah was responding to this call. I don't mean to give anyone that Noah had an intrinsic 'goodness' about him that appealed to the LORD – what Noah did was to respond to the work of the Holy Spirit in this 'contention' and as a result he had a proper relationship with the LORD. We need to keep this contrast in mind when we come to the all-important phrase; **"...Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD."**

### **The two facets of God's grace.**

So grace is associated with the eyes in our passage because the image intended here is that God had 'smiled' on Noah and was predisposed to do kind things to him. May we consider two facets of God's grace:

**First, it denotes a kindly attitude of God towards man.** Illustration from biblical times. For a woman to be smiled upon by a wealthy man meant security, love and prosperity. Women did not enjoy the kind of independence that they enjoy today. There were no 'jobs' for women. The only place for a woman of biblical times was for her to be provided for in her father's home until she married a man. Although there were arranged marriages at the time the best possible outlook for a woman was to be 'smiled upon' by a man and for her to be married to him.

I wish we could stop looking at the definition of grace as a sterile, dictionary sort of experience. God is a gracious *Person*. He desires, indeed, delights in the company of men.<sup>4</sup> The fact is that the LORD literally 'smiles' on men and delights in their company – this is, indeed, *the* definition of grace from a personal – not sterile – point of view.

#### **Illustration: Moses was a friend of the LORD.**

**"And the LORD spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend..."** Exodus 33:11a (KJV).

This was most remarkable! What follows in verses 12 and 13 can only be the conversation between friends. The phrase "know thee by name" is the equivalent of, say, the President of the United States coming up to one of us and calling us by our first name because he knew us and was pleased to be in our company. The other side of this conversation is equally amazing in that Moses spoke to the LORD in such a way as only to a Friend.

**The second facet of God's grace is that He *provides* for those whom He favors.** The story of Ruth the Moabitess and Boaz is an excellent example of this provision aspect of grace. I'll try not to belabor the story but briefly, Namoi was from Judea and had moved along with her husband to Moab because of a famine. There she, her husband and two sons hoped for at least a life of subsistence. The two sons married women of Moab one of which was Ruth. As the account goes Namoi lost her husband and both sons and was left desolate with her two daughters-in-law. As the account goes, Ruth decided to stay with Namoi and both of them returned to Bethlehem.

#### **Boaz' interest in Ruth.**

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**And Naomi had a kinsman of her husband's, a mighty man of wealth, of the family of Elimelech; and his name was Boaz. Ruth 2:1 (KJV)**

Bear in mind there was no social security or welfare in the sense that we have today. However, Judah did have laws that commanded compassion for the poor and indeed this story was an example of this along with that of grace. They had returned just in time for the harvest of barley and so as the law commanded they expected to reap the leavings from the corners of the harvest. Now the story becomes interesting. Naomi told Ruth to go glean in a certain field – Boaz' field.

**<sup>3</sup> And she went, and came, and gleaned in the field after the reapers: and her hap was to light on a part of the field belonging unto Boaz, who was of the kindred of Elimelech. <sup>4</sup> And, behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem, and said unto the reapers, The LORD be with you. And they answered him, The LORD bless thee. <sup>5</sup> Then said Boaz unto his servant that was set over the reapers, Whose damsel is this? <sup>6</sup> And the servant that was set over the reapers answered and said, It is the Moabitish damsel that came back with Naomi out of the country of Moab: <sup>7</sup> And she said, I pray you, let me glean and gather after the reapers among the sheaves: so she came, and hath continued even from the morning until now, that she tarried a little in the house.**

Note the interest that Boaz had in Ruth – this is the beginning of a gracious attitude toward her with an inevitable conclusion – later on that. Now it really gets personal with Boaz and Ruth.

**<sup>8</sup> Then said Boaz unto Ruth, Hearest thou not, my daughter? Go not to glean in another field, neither go from hence, but abide here fast by my maidens: <sup>9</sup> Let thine eyes be on the field that they do reap, and go thou after them: have I not charged the young men that they shall not touch thee? and when thou art athirst, go unto the vessels, and drink of that which the young men have drawn.**

Boaz now has shown that he greatly favors Ruth (our word chen) and has taken the next step in grace – provision.

**<sup>10</sup> Then she fell on her face, and bowed herself to the ground, and said unto him, Why have I found grace in thine eyes, that thou shouldst take knowledge of me, seeing I am a stranger? Ruth 2:3-10 (KJV).**

This may seem like a biblical romance story but the account goes deeper than that – this account serves also to illustrate the plight of man and the LORD's gracious attitude toward man. Remember our passage in Proverbs 8? Let's back up to verse 22 and discover that this is the Lord Jesus Christ speaking!<sup>5</sup>

### **Jesus Christ Delights in the Sons of Men.**

**<sup>22</sup> The LORD possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. <sup>23</sup> I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. <sup>24</sup> When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. <sup>25</sup> Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth: <sup>26</sup> While as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world. <sup>27</sup> When he prepared the heavens, I was there: when he set a compass upon the face of the depth: <sup>28</sup> When he established the clouds above: when he strengthened the fountains of the deep: <sup>29</sup> When he gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment: when he appointed the foundations of the earth: <sup>30</sup> Then I was by him, as one brought up**

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**with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him;** Proverbs 8:22-30 (KJV)

Here is a wonderful account of the intimate relationship of the Son of God and the rest of the trinity. The major point we should pick up on here is that of FELLOWSHIP of the Godhead. Now, if we can agree with this point there is exciting news for all of mankind. Jesus Christ shares gracious, kind thoughts towards the sons of men.<sup>6</sup>

**Rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth; and my delights were with the sons of men.** Proverbs 8:31 (KJV).

This is most exciting. Imagine that the most important person in the world would take an interest in you personally! Now imagine the benefits that might come from such an interest supposing that this person was a generous man! The implication of grace are that now only is there a kindly disposition but resourceful provision and protection! That's our precious Lord, Jesus Christ! A commentary from Matthew Henry would be helpful here:

*The Son of God declares himself to have been engaged in the creation of the world. How able, how fit is the Son of God to be the Saviour of the world, who was the Creator of it! The Son of God was ordained, before the world, to that great work. Does he delight in saving wretched sinners, and shall not we delight in his salvation? —Matthew Henry Concise*

### **What the New Testament Says about this Grace.**

Paul the apostle was so much endowed with the grace of our Lord. He was snatched from a career of murdering Christians to a life of promoting the very gospel he hated. Listen to what he has to say on the subject:

**<sup>4</sup> But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, <sup>5</sup> Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) <sup>6</sup> And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: <sup>7</sup> That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. <sup>8</sup> For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:** Ephesians 2:4-8 (KJV).

Again, the whole tone of this passage reflects the generosity of the LORD as found in Proverbs 8 and certainly matches up with Boaz' interest and generosity towards Ruth. So, we can certainly agree with the classic definition of Grace as God's unmerited favor toward man but I prefer to add to this that the Grace of God is the Heart of God in that He is VERY interested in the sons of man – in fact takes great delight in providing for his salvation. Proof of this is found in Luke's gospel:

**Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.** Luke 15:10 (KJV)

And so we see that the Grand Theme of God's Grace is present among men through the ages even if it comes down to one man Noah and his family. Amen!

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Endnotes:

1. **And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.** Genesis 6:6 (KJV) An anthropopathism – an ascription of human feelings to God. God is not controlled by emotional feelings. However, the policy of God is reflected by this representation.
2. See my lesson [Redemptive and the 21<sup>st</sup> Century – Introduction](#), last paragraph and following.
3. **And to Seth, to him also there was born a son; and he called his name Enos: then began men to call upon the name of the LORD.** Genesis 4:26 (KJV)
4. **Rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth; and my delights were with the sons of men.** Proverbs 8:31 (KJV).
5. From this point on, I think you will discover that the Lord Jesus Christ is speaking. —J. Vernon McGee's Thru The Bible. Matthew Henry and Wesley both support this view.
6. See this delight in [Hebrews 2:10-13](#).