

# **THE DOCTRINES OF GRACE**

## **(LESSON ONE)**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **EPHESIANS 1**

*1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus:*

*2 Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.*

*3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:*

*4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:*

*5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,*

*6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.*

*7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;*

*8 Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence;*

*9 Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:*

*10 That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:*

*11 In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:*

*12 That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.*

*13 In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,*

*14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.*

*15 Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints,*

*16 Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers;*

*17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him:*

*18 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,*

*19 And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power,*

*20 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places,*

*21 Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:*

*22 And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church,*

*23 Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.*

## **NEW LIVING TRANSLATION**

**1 This letter is from Paul, chosen by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus. I am writing to God's holy people in Ephesus, who are faithful followers of Christ Jesus.**

**2 May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace.**

**3 All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ.**

**4 Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes.**

**5 God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure.**

**6 So we praise God for the glorious grace he has poured out on us who belong to his dear Son.**

**7 He is so rich in kindness and grace that he purchased our freedom with the blood of his Son and forgave our sins.**

**8 He has showered his kindness on us, along with all wisdom and understanding.**

**9 God has now revealed to us his mysterious plan regarding Christ, a plan to fulfill his own good pleasure.**

**10 And this is the plan: At the right time he will bring everything together under the authority of Christ—everything in heaven and on earth.**

**11 Furthermore, because we are united with Christ, we have received an inheritance from God, for he chose us in advance, and he makes everything work out according to his plan.**

**12 God's purpose was that we Jews who were the first to trust in Christ would bring praise and glory to God.**

**13 And now you Gentiles have also heard the truth, the Good News that God saves you. And when you believed in Christ, he identified you as his own by giving you the Holy Spirit, whom he promised long ago.**

**14 The Spirit is God's guarantee that he will give us the inheritance he promised and that he has purchased us to be his own people. He did this so we would praise and glorify him.**

**15 Ever since I first heard of your strong faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for God's people everywhere,**

**16 I have not stopped thanking God for you. I pray for you constantly,**

**17 asking God, the glorious Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, to give you spiritual wisdom and insight so that you might grow in your knowledge of God.**

**18 I pray that your hearts will be flooded with light so that you can understand the confident hope he has given to those he called—his holy people who are his rich and glorious inheritance.**

**19 I also pray that you will understand the incredible greatness of God's power for us who believe him. This is the same mighty power**

**20 that raised Christ from the dead and seated him in the place of honor at God's right hand in the heavenly realms.**

**21 Now he is far above any ruler or authority or power or leader or anything else—not only in this world but also in the world to come.**

**22 God has put all things under the authority of Christ and has made him head over all things for the benefit of the church.**

**23 And the church is his body; it is made full and complete by Christ, who fills all things everywhere with himself.**

As we commence our study of the Doctrines of Grace, it is our sincere and fervent desire to present a view of the Almighty God that sets forth His transcendent majesty, glory and sovereignty in a way that is faithful to Holy Scripture.

It is very unfortunate that the prevailing culture of the church is one which appears to be hell-bent on exalting what is human and degrading what is divine. The post-modern church, in its misguided attempt to make the revelation of God found in the Bible more palatable, has lost much of the significance of the omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence, immutability, grandeur, supremacy, and absolute sovereignty and lordship of God. If we are not very careful, we who call ourselves Christians will be guilty of the awful sin of those described in **Romans 1:25**, "*Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.*" It is our hope that as we study the Doctrines of Grace, we will present the vision of a God who reigns supreme over everything; a God whose purposes are always accomplished as He intends; a God who is in control of the course of human affairs; a God who single-handedly directs the drama of saving a people for the honour of His great name; a God who does all of the above with perfect holiness and matchless grace.

We desire for the Lord Jesus Christ to be exalted "*Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come*" (**Ephesians 1:21**). It is of the utmost importance that His glory is upheld in light of the desire of even Christians to give man the pre-eminence. The Doctrines of Grace eradicate man-esteem entirely and promote God-esteem. They ensure that human elevation is transformed into divine glory. Their objective is that the supreme joy of the Christian be found in Jesus Christ alone.

The Doctrines of Grace are at the centre of the glory of God. They are the foundation for a theology that glorifies God, a theology that is centred in Jesus Christ, a theology that is saturated by the Holy Spirit and a theology that honours the Holy Scriptures. The Doctrines of Grace keep us radically God-centred. God deserves all the praise, all the glory and all the honour for our salvation. None belongs to us. A reading of the first fourteen verses of **Ephesians 1** makes this clear:

*1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus:*

*2 Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.*

*3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:*

*4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:*

*5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,*

*6 **To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.***

*7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;*

*8 Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence;*

*9 Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:*

*10 That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:*

*11 In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:*

*12 **That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.***

*13 In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,*

**14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.**

A denial of the Doctrines of Grace necessarily involves a reduction of the sovereignty and thus, the supremacy of God in the minds and hearts of His people. We must bear in mind that a God-centred vision of the Scriptures is foreign and repugnant to the natural man and even the individual who is born-again needs the corrective lens of the Scriptures to properly see it.

The Doctrines of Grace when correctly understood, are the foundation for a church that is strong, vibrant, resilient, full of joy and amenable to true Christian fellowship. When persons who are endeavouring to live for God are taught, and, as a result of being taught, understand the undeserved, unmerited, life-changing power of the grace of God that overcame their hardness of heart and their stubborn will and resurrected them from spiritual death to respond in faith to God in Christ, they are not merely stirred emotionally, they are transformed internally. When they realize it was the plan of God from eternity past to provide for and ensure their salvation; when they perceive that it was not they who chose Him but He who chose them in Christ from before the foundation of the world; when they come to acknowledge that it is to holiness and Christ-likeness that they have been called and not merely to the observing of rules and keeping of standards; when it dawns upon them that disobedience is not so much about the breaking of rules as it is about the breaking of God's heart; when they are persuaded that God will not give up on them and that His purposes relating to them will not fail – the result is a joy, a longing for faithfulness, a strong desire to please God that flows out of a deep appreciation of the unfathomable, overwhelming love of God for them. The Doctrines of Grace are the root of strength of character, faithfulness in conduct, courage of conviction, humility of spirit and hope for the future. In the absence of a full appreciation of these doctrines, the church is severely hindered.

In our study of the Doctrines of Grace, we will examine in some detail controversial subjects such as the Sovereignty of God, the Radical Corruption of man, Foreknowledge, Election and Predestination, the Atonement, Justification by Faith, the Security of the Christian and other related matters. Before doing so however we will address ourselves to a definition and explanation of Grace in Lesson Two.