

## [IN GOD'S IMAGE 36 – FROM LAW TO GRACE]

---

***Last time we looked at Jesus fulfilling and living up to the requirements of the Mosaic Covenant on behalf of Israel.***

- ◆ But Jesus' life and death was not meant only for the salvation of Israel. It was a sacrifice intended for the salvation of the whole world.
- ◆ You will remember from our discussion on the various covenants that although the Mosaic Covenant was terminated and replaced by the New Covenant, there was another covenant still in effect.
- ◆ This was the covenant God had made with Abraham.
- ◆ A key part of that covenant, was the promise made to Abraham that through his offspring, all nations of the earth would be blessed.
- ◆ ***Genesis 22:17-18 I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies,<sup>18</sup> and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me.***
- ◆ Who was this offspring by whom all the nations of the earth would be blessed? Jesus Christ.
- ◆ Paul confirms this promise made to Abraham.
- ◆ ***Galatians 3:29 If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.***
- ◆ This promise needs to be kept in mind as we examine the proceedings leading up to Jesus' crucifixion.

***The choosing of the nation of Israel to be God's special people was a blessing to the Israelites.***

- ◆ God delivered the nation out of Egyptian slavery. He provided for them as He led them through the desert. And He gave them victory over the nations occupying the Promised Land.
- ◆ Had they obeyed God rather than being a stiff-necked and rebellious people, they would have continued to enjoy God's blessings.
- ◆ However, being chosen as God's special people also came with a burden.
- ◆ Not only did they have to remain obedient, a big ask for humans, but they also carried the burden of being "representative" of all nations.
- ◆ We have looked at this "representative" principle before in relation to the "first Adam" and the "second Adam" (1 Corinthians 15:45, Romans 5:12-20).
- ◆ We also discussed how Israel preferred to maintain a distance between themselves and God when they asked Moses to go up on the mountain and communicate with God on their behalf (Exodus 20:19).
- ◆ The difficulty of this relationship was only intensified the closer a holy God tried to draw nearer to His people as it only magnified their sinfulness.
- ◆ The giving of the law for instance imposed an added burden on the people as it only magnified their sinfulness (Romans 7:7-9).
- ◆ But now with the incarnation, God came to dwell amongst them.
- ◆ And we see the terrible nature of man's sin contrasted with the love and grace of God especially from the religious establishment as they plotted to kill the Son of God.
- ◆ Such is the deceitfulness and wickedness of the human heart that it blinded them from even recognising the Messiah in their very midst.

***But this had to happen if God was to fulfil his promise to Abraham in bringing about salvation to both Israel and the world.***

- ◆ Israel in the corporate sense is used by God to represent all the nations of the earth.
- ◆ It would not have made any difference which nation God chose, as all, because of our fallen evil nature, would have done exactly the same thing.
- ◆ But by choosing or electing Israel to be representative of a rebellious mankind under the judgment of God, it also enabled them to be included in the resulting grace of God in being complicit in the most hideous crime of putting the Son of God to death.
- ◆ It is no accident that in Jesus' ordeal in leading up to the crucifixion, representatives of all humanity is implicated in the execution.
- ◆ Individual Jews such as Judas who betrayed Jesus; the disciples who fled in the garden; and Peter who denied Jesus; the Jewish religious establishment such as the high priest and the other religious leaders; the Jewish civil

## [IN GOD'S IMAGE 36 – FROM LAW TO GRACE]

---

administration represented by Herod; the Jewish nation represented by the crowd crying, “crucify Him, crucify Him”; the Gentile nations represented by Pilate and the Roman soldiers who administered the sentence.

- ◆ In one way or another, all are implicated in the death of the Son of God including you and me.
- ◆ As the hymn goes, “Were you there when they crucified my Lord?” And of course the answer is “yes.”
- ◆ However it is in reference to this same group of people that Jesus asks His Father, **“forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.” (Luke 23:34).**
- ◆ Such is the love of God, that not only is Jesus willing to substitute Himself for the sins of mankind, but as He is the one being executed on their behalf, and against whom sin is such an affront, He is willing to extend forgiveness even to His tormentors.
- ◆ God is committed to being our God despite humanity’s sin. **“I will be your God and you will be my people” (Leviticus 26:12)** even if it costs me my life.
- ◆ This gracious act of love on the part of Jesus fulfilled the promise made to Abraham and inaugurated the New Covenant which was to encompass both Jew and Gentile.
- ◆ **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 (the Jews) but also to those who have the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all.**
- ◆ So Israel, by their stubbornness in rejecting the grace of God extended to them, unwittingly gathered all humanity into God’s embrace.
- ◆ Not only was forgiveness of sin extended to Israel, but to the whole human race by nature of the fact Jesus’ blood was shed for all mankind.
- ◆ Jesus was fulfilling John the Baptist’s earlier prophecy, **“Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29).**
- ◆ Mankind is forever linked to God through the substituting love of Jesus Christ.

***This act of sacrifice on Jesus’ part had a dramatic impact on the relationship between God and mankind.***

- ◆ No longer would mankind live under the condemnation of God’s law.
- ◆ **Colossians 2:14 having cancelled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross.**
- ◆ The legal demands of the law along with its power to condemn all humanity, that great debt we had no way of repaying, Jesus by accepting it’s just demands has effectively stamped it, “paid in full.”
- ◆ Jesus, by His willingness to die on our behalf can now offer forgiveness of sins to all. Our status in God’s eyes has changed.
- ◆ Rather than living under the condemnation of the “law,” mankind now lives under God’s free gift of “grace.”
- ◆ **Romans 5:15 For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, (Adam) how much more did God’s grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many!**
- ◆ If all men are condemned by the act of one man, Adam, then following this representative principle, the grace of God is also extended to all men.
- ◆ God no longer regards mankind as sinners, but rather as forgiven sinners, not because of anything we have done, but because of what Christ has done on our behalf.
- ◆ **John 1:17 For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.**
- ◆ This change of status is dramatically reflected when at the precise moment of Christ’s death, the temple veil separating the holy of holies from the rest of the temple is torn from top to bottom.
- ◆ The fact it was torn from the top shows it was a miraculous event done by the hand of God.
- ◆ It was His way of signifying this change of status where mankind, through Jesus, now has access to, and direct communion with God Himself.
- ◆ Jesus, as our High Priest representing both priestly roles earlier fulfilled by Moses and Aaron, through His Word and through His self-sacrifice opened up the way to the Father.
- ◆ **John 14:6 “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.**
- ◆ As mentioned earlier, if the incarnation was about God drawing near to man, the atonement was about God providing the way for a sinful mankind to draw near to Him.
- ◆ The way is thrown open to all mankind through the mediating role of Jesus Christ.

## [IN GOD'S IMAGE 36 – FROM LAW TO GRACE]

---

***Now before anyone implies this truth suggests universal salvation that would be a mistake. Just because grace is available to all men, does not necessarily mean all will take advantage of it.***

- ◆ Grace is a gift, bought at a terrible price. But as with all gifts, there is the act of giving and the act of receiving. A gift offered has to be accepted.
- ◆ We will come back to this very important subject later.