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## **THE TWO WORKS OF GRACE IN THE SCRIPTURES**

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## **INTRODUCTION TO THE DIGITAL EDITION**

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## INTRODUCTION

The title of these messages is no new and unfamiliar subject to holiness people. The purpose of these messages is not to present what many great and good people have said about the subject but rather to present, as best I can, what the Bible says about the two works of grace.

The Scriptures teach two works of grace because they teach two different kinds of sin. Sin is not one but two things -- a morally wrong voluntary act requiring one work of grace and a morally wrong inborn principle requiring another work of grace. These two kinds of sin make necessary two divine works to remove them.

The act of sin requires divine forgiveness and the inherited principle of sin requires divine cleansing. The act of divine forgiveness in regeneration and the act of divine cleansing in entire sanctification are two different religious experiences. Just as God moves in an orderly way in nature to fulfill His plan, so He moves in an orderly way in grace to fulfill His redemptive plan. The two works of grace in the Scriptures will be illustrated in the brief messages to follow.

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## 01 -- THE TWO WORKS OF GRACE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

Psalms 51 is an excellent Old Testament illustration of the two works of grace. In this prayer David revealed the content of true religion. He laid bare his troubled soul before God. With a broken and contrite heart he confessed to God that sin was his supreme personal problem and that deliverance was the one need and desire of his heart. He recognized God as the only Deliverer from sin. He sought God for present victory over sin.

### I. The Two Different Kings of Sin

#### Mentioned in Psalms 51

##### (a) Sin as an ACT

In true penitence with a broken spirit and contrite heart David confessed his sins to a merciful God according to verses one and seventeen. In different ways he made his confession to God. He knew that God would not forgive his unconfessed sins. In verses one and three David made the same confession saying, "My transgressions." In these words David confessed that he had broken the laws of God. In verse four He said, "I [have] sinned, and done this evil in thy sight." By this statement David admitted that he knew God had seen him commit all of his acts of sin and therefore they could not be hidden from God. David was a penitent and confessing sinner. In verse nine David continued the confession of his sins in the words, "My sins." Here David did not try to

excuse himself nor blame anyone else, but frankly admitted that his morally wrong acts were his own sins, for which he felt guilty and responsible. By the word "bloodguiltiness" in verse fourteen, David described the personal guilt he felt for the terrible wrong he had done in the plotted death of Uriah. He committed the horrible wickedness against Uriah in order that he might take his beautiful wife, Bathsheba. The memory of this morally wrong act never faded from his mind and heart (verse 3). The sad story is told in II Samuel 11.

In all of these Scripture references David talked about his own morally wrong acts against God, for which he alone felt guilty and responsible. His own sins hung like a dark cloud over his head and stung his conscience like an adder. Throughout the entire Bible the same idea of sin as a morally wrong act, voluntarily committed against God, is clearly revealed.

#### (b) Sin as a PRINCIPLE

David was not only keenly conscious of his own sinful conduct but of a morally wrong bent in his moral nature; for he said, in verse five, "I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me." In this verse David plainly declared that from the moment of his conception he had sin in him. Clearly this was not an act of his own sin to which he referred, for he could not before birth have committed an act of sin. His moral nature was unholy and inclined toward acts of rebellion against God. He was born with this unlikeness to God in his moral nature.

This sinful condition in which David was born could not be associated with nor blamed on any sinful act of his parents, for they were godly parents. To David this sin was the "inborn sin," which he inherited as a part of the universal moral bloodstream of the human race, polluted by the fall of Adam. For this inner, morally unclean birthmark, David was in no way responsible. His responsibility would begin when he consciously yielded to its unclean influence in wrongdoing and, on discovery of its presence within, refused to seek God for its removal.

This inherited, inborn principle of sin in human nature has many different names in Scripture and theology. Throughout the Old Testament this same idea of sin as an "inborn," morally wrong, inherited principle or condition is clearly taught. This conception of sin is continued in the New Testament. Thus the two kinds of sin -- sin as a voluntary wrong act, and sin as an inherited, inborn, unholy, active, moral principle -- were plainly a part of David's conscious personal experience revealed in this fifty-first psalm.

## II. The Two Divine Remedies Sought

### For The Two Kinds of Sin

David wanted to be all God's man. He clearly and definitely confessed the two kinds of sin troubling him. With equal definiteness he sought God for deliverance from both kinds of sin. According to verse twelve, he did not want to live spiritually defeated; nor according to verse eleven, did he want God to cast him away from his presence or take the Holy Spirit from him. He thirsted for God.

#### (a) David sought FORGIVENESS.

As a deeply convicted sinner, David acknowledged his transgressions to God with a broken spirit and contrite heart (verses 3 and 17). In the spirit of true penitence he pleaded for the mercy and kindness of God in forgiveness (verses 1 and 9). He knew that God could and would hide His face from his sins only if he sincerely confessed them (verse 9). David wanted the burden of sins lifted from his troubled soul. Wanting to get in right relationship with God, he turned his back on sin and his face toward God in genuine repentance and faith.

(b) David sought a PURE HEART.

Being clearly conscious that at the center of his moral being was a morally unclean heart, David prayed, "Create in me a clean heart, O God" (verse 10). The Psalmist strongly confessed his need and desire for a pure heart. He was seeking a personal experience of heart purity, for he prayed, "Create in me a clean heart." David knew that God created the first man with a holy nature, which was lost in the Fall. Because he was a member of the fallen human race he became painfully aware that he had partaken of the uncleanness of fallen human nature through the process of birth (verse 5). He sought God clearly and definitely to give him a clean heart by washing, cleansing, and purging his moral nature from the inherited, inborn sin principle (verses 2, 5, and 7). David knew that only by the divine work of washing, cleansing, and purging could he be delivered from his uncleanness and be made spiritually whiter than snow (verse 7). Thus David in this psalm was clear and definite in his confession of the two kinds of sin, and in seeking God for its removal by the two works of divine grace -- forgiveness and cleansing. Some outward expressions of these two works of grace will be considered next.

### III. Impression Plus Expression

One of the basic principles in education and religion is that impression seeks expression. Impression without expression is another way of saying that "faith without works is dead." David believed that religious experience was the mainspring of religious action. He said in this prayer that when he was forgiven and cleansed he would get into action for the God who had saved and sanctified him. He foresaw himself doing at least three appropriate things when he received the needed two works of grace. The three things were personal soul winning, singing, and praising.

(a) Personal soul winning

In verse thirteen David said, "Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee." He believed that in definite religious experience God gave the true motivation and divine urge to win others to Him by whatever methods possible. He promised God that when delivered from sin he would teach transgressors God's ways and get sinners converted. He would help all others to know God in the same measure he had experienced Him. He would become a laborer together with God. This is the spiritual reaction of all divinely touched souls; evangelism becomes a first.

(b) Singing

In verse fourteen David prayed, "Deliver me, thou God of my salvation: and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness." To David, singing was one of the most meaningful expressions of the human soul. In divine experience he recognized that his tongue would be released and directed to sing about God's righteousness. David became the great musician, song writer, instrument player, and sweet singer of Israel. No one can sing like those who, like David, have been delivered from all sin. All who have experienced God enjoy trying to sing, and this accounts for the inspiration of congregational singing.

#### (c) Praise

In verse fifteen David prayed, "O Lord, open thou my lips; and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise." He knew that by the two works of grace -- forgiveness and cleansing -- God could and would open his mouth to praise Him. Praise is an expression of a divinely touched heart through divinely touched lips. To David, religious experience was the springboard of true praise. All who have been delivered by the power of God are, like David, God's praising body on earth. David in many ways and times gave praise to his delivering God. The praise of a clean heart and freed lips became part of "evangelism first" to David.

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## 02 -- THE TWO WORKS OF GRACE IN THE GOSPELS

Holiness of heart and life has always been God's plan for man, according to the Apostle Paul in Eph. 1:4. God's methods of making man holy may change, but His plan and purpose for man to be holy, like himself, never changes.

God's first method of making man holy was creation. By His creative method God made only one man and one woman holy (Gen. 1:26-27). God's second method of making man holy was birth. By His birth method God planned that all of the descendants of holy Adam and Eve should be born holy like themselves, following the divinely implanted law of heredity (Gen. 1:11-12, 21-22, 24-25, 28). But by His normal birth method God made no one holy, as no child was born to Adam and Eve before they fell into sin and became unholy themselves; therefore by the law of heredity all of Adam and Eve's descendants by natural birth were born unholy like unto themselves. By God's redemptive method in Christ He made it possible for all the unholy descendants of unholy Adam and Eve to be holy again through the two works of grace.

The two works of grace as taught in the Gospels will now be considered.

### I. The First Work of Grace Experienced

The following references and examples will be sufficient scriptural proof of the first work of grace in the experience of the disciples:

#### (a) They were born of God.

That the disciples were born of God is proved by the following Scripture verses: "But as many as received him, to them gave he power [the right] to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:12-13). The disciples did believe on and receive Christ, and were therefore born of God.

(b) They were branches in Christ, the Vine.

By the natural vine and its branches Jesus illustrated the vital and mystical spiritual relation between himself and the disciples: "I am the vine, ye are the branches" (John 15:5). The Apostle Paul said: "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature" (II Cor. 5:17). Because the disciples were in Christ, the Vine, they were therefore new persons.

(c) They were keeping the Word of God.

In His prayer Jesus said: "They have kept thy word" (John 17:6). This was convincing testimony to the obedience of His disciples. Jesus said of all true discipleship: "If a man love me, he will keep my words." (John 14:23). Since they were keeping the Word of God, the disciples proved thereby that they did love their Lord.

(d) They belonged to God.

Again Jesus said of His disciples: "They are thine" (John 17:9). By this statement Jesus showed their relation to God, proving that the disciples had the first work of grace, which made them children of God.

(e) They were not of the world.

Jesus again testified to His Father for His disciples in His prayer: "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world" (John 17:16). The unsaved world no longer gave them their ideals and satisfactions, but Christ had become their Pattern, and to follow Him had become their practice. This experience of the first work of grace separated them from the world even as their Lord was separated from the world. They were in the world but not of the world. This is proof of an inner divine work expressing itself in outward Christian life.

(f) Their names were written in heaven.

In Luke 10:20, Jesus said to seventy of His disciples on their return from an evangelistic tour: "Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven." This is evidence of a divine work that placed their names in the Book of Life.

(g) They worshipped Christ.

The inspired historian Luke said in his Gospel: "And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven. And they worshipped him, and

returned to Jerusalem with great joy: and were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God" (Luke 24:51-53). These verses describe the inner joy of the disciples, their love for the house of God, and their worship of Christ as the Center of their affections. Also these verses describe their full acceptance of Christ and His way of life.

(h) They were made stewards of the Gospel.

In Mark 16:15, Jesus said to His disciples: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." The gospel they had received and experienced they were to share with all people "both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8). It is neither reasonable nor scriptural to think that the Lord would have turned the spread of the gospel over to unsaved persons.

## II. The Second Work of Grace Needed

Eight scriptural evidences have been previously given showing that the disciples had experienced the first work of grace. Scripture proof will be presented next showing that the disciples needed the second work of grace.

(a) The disciples needed perfect love.

It has been previously shown that the disciples did love the Lord by keeping His word, but Jesus wanted them to be perfect in their love like their Heavenly Father. Jesus said to His disciples: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matt. 5:48). In Matt. 5:43-48, Jesus explained to them what He meant by perfect love in both the Father and in them. God the Father sent His rain and sunshine on the evil and the good, on the just and the unjust. Likewise the disciples were to love their enemies, bless them that cursed them, do good to them that hated them, pray for them which despitefully used them and persecuted them. They were not to love just those who loved them. They were not to salute their brethren only. They were to be like God as seen in Christ, toward their enemies. Perfect love is another term for entire sanctification, Christian perfection, or the second work of grace. Christ would not have commanded His disciples to be perfect if they were already perfect or could not be perfect.

(b) The disciples needed purging.

Though the disciples were in Christ, the Vine, and were bearing fruit, Jesus wanted to purge them in order that they might bear more fruit (John 15:2). Jesus was interested in their spiritual welfare. He wanted them to be the best possible disciples and told them what it would take -- purging. The English word cathartic comes from a Greek word which Jesus used here, meaning a purgative or cleansing. The Lord knew that deep down in the moral nature of His disciples there were seeds of fear, doubt, sectarianism, greed, jealousy, strife, unholy ambition, and place seeking. They needed these carnal seeds purged from their nature if they were going to bear more fruit for their Lord. According to Jesus, this work of cleansing is the experience that every one of His followers needs to make him a better Christian. Jesus would not have said, "Every branch [in me] that beareth fruit, he purgeth it," if they had been purged when they became

branches in Him or if they did not need purging. Jesus taught the doctrine of purging as a second experience only for those already in Him and bearing fruit.

Other names for this purging experience are entire sanctification, perfect love, Christian perfection, and the second work of grace. This purging for all Christians, Jesus taught, was necessary for spiritual health and greater usefulness, as it would mean the elimination of all carnal uncleanness from their moral nature just as bodily health is maintained by the elimination of filth from the physical system.

(c) The disciples needed to be sanctified.

In His prayer to the Father, Jesus said in John 17:4: "I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." He was now ready to return to heaven and send the Holy Spirit to do His redemptive work on the earth. In His prayer Jesus also talked to the Father about His disciples. He said to His Father that His disciples were keeping His word (verse 6); that they belonged to Him (verse 9); that He was glorified in them (verse 10); that they were not of the world, even as He was not of the world (verse 16); that He wanted them kept from the evil one (verse 15); yet they were not sanctified but needed to be. He prayed, "Sanctify them" (verse 17). According to the prayer of Jesus, His disciples did not get sanctified when they became disciples. Sanctification was an experience only for disciples, so He prayed for every one of them to be sanctified. He taught them that sanctification would completely identify them with the will, purpose, and work of the Father and the Son (verses 18 and 21). Sanctification would remove from them all inner conflict with the whole known will of God. If Jesus prayed for all His disciples to be sanctified, surely then, every true Christian should pray to be sanctified. Sanctification is another name for Christian perfection, perfect love, and purging.

(d) The disciples needed the Holy Spirit.

In Luke 24:49, Jesus said to His disciples: "And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high." Again, Jesus said to His disciples in Acts 1:4-5: "And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." The terms Christian perfection, perfect love, purging, sanctification, and the baptism with the Holy Spirit or Holy Ghost are different names for the same experience -- the second work of grace.

### III. The Second Work of Grace Received

In John 16:7, Jesus said to His disciples: "Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you." In Acts 1:4-5, Jesus told His disciples to wait in Jerusalem until He sent the Holy Spirit to them in baptismal experience. In speaking of the Pentecost recorded in Acts 2:1-13, the Apostle Peter said in verse 33: "Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear." True to His promise to send the Holy Spirit when He returned to His Father, and



while in obedience to His command 120 disciples waited for the promise, He did send the Holy Spirit to them in fulfillment of His promise. He did depart; the disciples did wait; He did send the Holy Spirit; and the disciples did receive the promise of the Father -- the baptism with the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:4-5; 2:1-4).

Peter explained to his listeners that the baptism with the Spirit received by all the 120 disciples, including himself, was the outpouring of the Spirit which God promised through the prophet Joel (Acts 2:12-18). Just what was the spiritual content of the Christian experience produced in the 120 waiting, obeying, believing, and consecrating Christians when they received the baptism with, or the outpouring of, the Holy Spirit? The three phases of the one experience were purity, filling, and empowering. These three effects constitute the content of the one experience of the baptism with the Holy Ghost, according to the inspired record. This normal-content, pattern experience was set on the Day of Pentecost for all Christians regardless of race, sex, age, station in life, or circumstances. The baptism with the Holy Spirit purified, filled, and empowered the 120 disciples according to the testimony of the Apostle Peter in Acts 15:8-9. All the 120 disciples, including himself, received pure hearts. Also, according to the record of Luke in Acts 2:4, all were filled with the Holy Ghost. Too, according to the words of Jesus found in Acts 1:8, all the disciples received power to witness to Him everywhere. So we see that heart purity, filling, and empowering for service were, and are, the three phases of the one experience of the baptism with the Holy Spirit.

The Church of the Nazarene in the Manual, says: Entire sanctification "is wrought by the baptism with the Holy Spirit, and comprehends in one experience the cleansing of the heart from sin and the abiding indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, empowering the believer for life and service." The baptism with the Holy Spirit was the second work of grace needed and received by all the 120 believing and obedient disciples in the Upper Room on the Pentecost day recorded in the second chapter of Acts.

The expression of this experience in the outward life of the disciples will be considered next.

#### IV. Some of The Outward Expressions of The Second Work of Grace Experienced in The Daily Life of The Disciples

(a) They were more courageous for their Lord.

Before the 120 disciples received their Christian Pentecost -- the baptism with the Holy Ghost -- they were troubled with fear, but afterward they all stood up for their Lord with boldness. They dared to withstand and challenge their enemies. They had received their spiritual dynamite in the baptism with the Holy Spirit experience, and a holy boldness for their Lord was manifested as a result (Acts 4:19-20; 5:28-29). They were willing to lay down their lives for Christ but they were not willing to yield to His and their enemies.

(b) They were more zealous in their Christian service.

The 120 disciples came down from the Upper Room experience and went from house to house in Jerusalem until every home had heard them teach and preach Jesus Christ (Acts 5:42). They gave their testimonies in the greatest house-to-house visitation campaign that Jerusalem had ever experienced. This great visitation crusade resulted in sowing Jerusalem down with their doctrine, according to the testimony of even their enemies (Acts 5:28).

(c) Their evangelistic zeal was intensified.

Under the influence of the first work of grace the disciples won some souls to their Lord in personal and group evangelism; but after the second work of grace on the Day of Pentecost their evangelistic zeal was intensified and broadened. The Lord blessed them in their deepened zeal to win souls as the following Scripture quotes will show: "They that gladly received his word were baptized; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls" (Acts 2:41). "Many of them which heard the word believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand" (Acts 4:4). "And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women" (Acts 5:14). "The word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great Company of the priests were obedient to the faith" (Acts 6:7). The Book of Acts is a classic story of Spirit-filled Christians carrying on a great crusade for souls.

(d) Their Christian worship was quickened.

They loved the house of God (the church) even more, as will be seen in the following quotations: "Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer" (Acts 3:1). "And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple" (Acts 2:46).

(e) They were more liberal in their giving.

The following quotations will show they were liberal with their material possessions in promoting the work of the Lord: "And all that believed were together, and had all things common; and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need" (Acts 2:44-45). "And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but that they had all things common. Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the apostles' feet: and the distribution was made unto every man according as he had need. And Joses, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas (which is being interpreted, the Son of consolation,) a Levite, and of the country of Cyprus, having land, sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet" (Acts 4:32-37). These sanctified disciples tithed and made freewill offerings. They practiced true stewardship by recognizing God as the Owner of all things and themselves as only stewards of God.

(f) They were more fervent in prayer.

The filling of the Spirit quickened and intensified the prayer life of the disciples, as the following quotations will show: "When they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together" (Acts 4:31). "Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without

ceasing of the church unto God for him" (Acts 12:5). "He came to the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark; where many were gathered together praying" (Acts 12:12). The Book of Acts is a record of victorious praying. Prayer to these Christians was a spiritual battle weapon.

(g) They were more victorious in trial.

The enemy resorted to every device to block the victorious march of the Spirit-baptized army of the Lord. When the Jewish council had beaten the apostles and commanded them not to speak in the name of Jesus, the record says, "They departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name" (Acts 5:41). The enemy lied about Stephen, stirred up the people, elders, and scribes against him; but the record says, "All that sat in the council, looking stedfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel" (Acts 6:15). Again the record says, "He [Stephen] being full of the Holy Ghost [when they stoned him] . . . he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep" (Acts 7:55-60). After they had been beaten and jailed, the record says, "At midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang" (Acts 16:25).

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## 03 -- THE TWO WORKS OF GRACE IN THE BOOK OF ACTS

The Christian movement was a distinctly holiness or two-works-of-grace movement during the first thirty-year period covered by the Acts of the Apostles. The Church was in its infancy but the divine pattern of religious experience was clearly established.

Many illustrations of the two works of grace are recorded in the Book of Acts but only one illustration will be discussed here.

### I. The First Work of Grace

#### (a) The revival meeting at Samaria

The church at Jerusalem was going through a severe persecution (Acts 8:1). Stephen was stoned to death (Acts 7:54-60; 8:2). Saul became one of the fiercest and most able anti-Christian leaders in this persecution (Acts 7:58; 8:3; 9:1-2). Because of the severity of the persecution many Christian leaders left Jerusalem and went into the regions of Judea and Samaria, Phenice, Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the Word (Acts 8:1, 4; 11:19-20). One of them was Philip, one of the seven specially chosen stewards mentioned in Acts 6:1-6. Philip was led of the Lord to go down to the city of Samaria and preach Christ unto them (Acts 8:5). The city of Samaria was known for the practice there of sorcery, led by a man called Simon (Acts 8:9-11). The city of Samaria was, therefore, strongly prejudiced in favor of Simon and his witchcraft because the people were ignorant of anything better. According to the record, Philip did not directly attack Simon nor his sorcery error, as this would have given undue offense and prejudiced his message and effort. Philip chose rather to preach Christ and the things concerning the kingdom of God (Acts 8:12). The

best way to overcome error is with the truth. The power of the gospel was demonstrated as Philip preached it under the guidance and anointing of the Holy Ghost.

(b) Their first spiritual need -- to be saved

The following record is proof enough that the people of Samaria did get salvation:

1. "Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them" (Acts 8:5). The heart of the Christian gospel is Christ. Philip presented Christ, the Saviour, to the lost and unsaved people of Samaria.

2. "And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake" (Acts 8:6). The preaching of Christ by Philip in the power of the Holy Spirit met a felt need and found a warm response in the minds and hearts of the people of Samaria. The people gave heed, which means they accepted the message of the evangelist Philip.

3. The people of Samaria were deeply convicted. As they listened to Philip and accepted the message, they were seized with deep conviction and began to cry out loud to Christ to save them. The Holy Spirit honored the preached Word and made it sharper than any twoedged sword.

4. The people of Samaria experienced deliverance from sin. As the people heard the gospel message and responded to it, their hearts became hungry for salvation and they prayed through to victory. Christ delivered them from unclean spirits (Acts 8:7). In this deliverance from sin these Samaritan people experienced the first work of grace.

5. "There was great joy in that city" (Acts 8:8). In accepting Christ as their Saviour the people of Samaria not only felt the burden of sin lifted but peace and joy came into their hearts. There were both the negative and the positive sides to their experience of salvation. The whole city felt the transforming influence of this revival. Even Simon felt its great power and professed (Acts 8:13).

6. The people were baptized. As an outward testimony of their belief in, and acceptance of, Christ, these saved Samaritans received Christian baptism (Acts 8:12).

That the people in the city of Samaria had a spiritual revival and experienced the first work of grace is clearly seen in the six evidences presented here. Their second experience will be considered next.

## II. The Second Work of Grace

News of the revival spread. That the Word of God when faithfully preached in the power of the Holy Spirit will produce spiritual results was abundantly demonstrated in the city of Samaria. A genuine revival must be soundly based on the Word of God. News that Samaria had received the Word of God and experienced a spiritual transformation reached the apostles at Jerusalem (Acts 8:14).

(a) The apostles were sent from Jerusalem to Samaria.

The apostles were thrilled over the good news about the movings of the Holy Spirit. To further encourage and participate in the revival they sent Peter and John (Acts 8:14). Apostolic approval was given to what had been done under the preaching of Philip. The first phase of the revival was getting the people of Samaria saved. The second phase was to get the saved people sanctified. This was done under the leadership of Peter and John.

(b) Peter and John prayed.

The two apostles realized the value of prayer in the work of God. They remembered the example and teachings of Jesus on prayer. All of the apostles said, in Acts 6:4: "We will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word." Peter and John joined with others in a concerted prayer effort for the continuation of the Samaritan revival (Acts 8:15). The first Christian Pentecost in the second chapter of Acts was preceded by a period of intensive prayer (Acts 1:12-14).

(c) They prayed that they "might receive the Holy Ghost"

This was a prayer for a particular group to receive a definite experience. The apostles did not pray that the Samaria people might hear the Word of God, for they had already heard. Neither did they pray that the people might accept the Word of God, for this they had already done. Nor did they pray that there might be deep conviction, for this had already been manifested even in loud crying. Peter and John did not pray that the people might be saved from their sins, for they had already been delivered from unclean spirits, followed by great joy. The apostles did not pray that the people might be baptized, for they had already received Christian baptism (Acts 8:12-16). The apostles did set the example of praying for Christians to receive the Holy Ghost. The Samaritan Christians were spiritually ready for this prayer to be answered. According to the apostles the very next thing for all Christians to do after being saved is to pray that they might receive the baptism with the Holy Spirit.

(d) They led them into the second work of grace.

The people in the city had already experienced the first work of grace under the preaching of Philip before Peter and John came. This the apostles recognized and approved, but they knew the remaining need of these saved people was that they receive the Holy Spirit to cleanse, to fill, and to empower them; for Acts 8:17 says, "Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost." This experience was the second work of grace. When the 120 Christians in the second chapter of Acts received the Holy Ghost they were cleansed, they were filled, and they were empowered for Christian service (Acts 15:8-9; 2:4; 1:8). The same thing was true with the Samaritan Christians when they received the Holy Ghost. The people of Samaria were part Jew and part Gentile. The only qualification for receiving the second work of grace, regardless of race, language, or color, is to have, as an experience, the first work of grace. That the people in Samaria experienced both works of grace is clear from all scriptural evidence

### III. The Evangelistic Outreach

After the revival in Samaria was over, the three workers, Philip, Peter, and John, departed (Acts 8:25-26). They left a good church behind. Peter and John returned to Jerusalem and as they journeyed they preached the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans. Philip was led of the Lord to go elsewhere. The Christians in the city of Samaria knew that Philip, Peter, and John had labored among them in an effective evangelistic crusade. The people tasted deeply of the spirit of evangelism which had resulted in their becoming Christians. The same spirit that worked in and through Philip, Peter, and John would work in and through these Samaritan Christians to win others to Christ (Acts 9:31).

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## 04 -- THE TWO WORKS OF GRACE IN THE ROMAN LETTER

When Paul was at Corinth he wrote his letter to the church at Rome, the capital of the Roman Empire and the recognized metropolis of the world. The city had a mixed population of from one to three million, and the vast empire had a population of probably one hundred million.

In his Roman letter Paul not only discussed the two works of grace but also some of the basic Christian universals, some of which are as follows: the universality of God, of law, of sin, of redemption in Christ, of salvation by faith, of the gospel invitation, of judgment. The two works of grace in the Roman letter will now be considered separately.

### I. The First Work Of Grace in The Roman Letter

#### (a) "To all that be in Rome."

In verse seven of chapter one Paul clearly is writing to all the Christians at Rome, both Jews and Gentiles. Only Christians would fit the apostle's description in this verse. He addresses them as "beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ."

The origin of the church at Rome is not known. There is no proof in either sacred or secular literature that any apostle founded it. One authority says that possibly the gospel was first preached there by some who were converted at Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost. We read in Acts 2:10 that there were at Jerusalem "strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes." These, on their return, would naturally declare the wonders they had witnessed and proclaim that truth by which they themselves had received salvation. At least the Christians at Rome had the first work of grace.

#### (b) Their faith.

In Rom. 1:8, Paul thanks God for the faith of the Christians at Rome. The apostle tells them that their faith in Christ "is spoken of throughout the whole world." Everywhere throughout the Roman Empire their faith was common talk among all Christians. Working in various parts of the empire, Paul heard reports of their faith. This faith in Christ is further proof that they had experienced the first work of grace.

(c) Free from acts of sin.

In 6:16, Paul teaches that everyone has freedom to choose his loyalties and the direction of his obedience. One can choose sin or righteousness. In 6:17-18 the apostle reminds the Christians at Rome that at one time they were sinners serving sin, but that when they heard the gospel they accepted it and were made free from serving sin. This is the picture of a slave being set free. They were no longer instruments of unrighteousness but rather the instruments of righteousness unto God (6:13). They had been changed from serving sin to serving God (6:22). This is the experience of the first work of grace. Anyone having experienced saving grace does not knowingly continue to commit sin. He chooses to live righteously and helpfully in the work of Christ.

(d) "No condemnation."

In 8:1, these Roman Christians had been freely pardoned of all their sins when they accepted Christ and became His bond servants. All guilt and condemnation had been lifted. They began following the leadership of the Holy Spirit. This all results from the first work of grace.

(e) Paul requested their prayers (15:30).

In 15:22-33 the apostle reminds the Christians at Rome of his strong desire to finish his work elsewhere and to come by to see them. For many years Paul had wanted to come unto them but always was hindered. In his planned trip to Spain he would stop off in Rome to visit with them. This trip became the apostle's vision and burden and he strongly urged Roman Christians to join him in prayer that God would enable him to make it. Paul had confidence in the prayers of the Christians at Rome.

## II. The Second Work Of Grace In The Roman Letter

(a) They needed the establishing grace.

In 1:10-11 the apostle tells the church at Rome that for a long time he had been earnestly praying that God would open the way for him to visit them. His prayer was answered and after a stormy voyage he reached Rome. The burden of his heart was to get the Christians there established. What Paul meant by getting them established was that they might become firmly fixed, set, strengthened, confirmed, and supported in their Christian life and experience. Christ and His apostles, including Paul, taught the establishing grace. Jesus taught His disciples that sanctification was the experience of grace that would fix them in oneness with the Father and the Son (John 17:17-21). Again Jesus taught His disciples that they needed the baptism with the Holy Spirit to establish in them a pure heart, the fullness of the Spirit, and the strength necessary for worldwide witnessing (Acts 1:4-5, 8; 15:8-9). Into this same experience of establishing grace the apostles sought to lead all converts according to the record in the Book of Acts. At this point the Apostle Paul was specifically strong.

In Acts 19:2, Paul asked twelve disciples of John the Baptist at Ephesus if they had received the Holy Spirit since believing. He wanted all Christians to be baptized with the Holy

Spirit to better settle them and support them in the things of God. The apostle taught the Roman Christians that the gift of the Holy Spirit would establish them (1:11). Again the apostle taught the Thessalonian Christians that the experience of holiness would establish them (I Thess. 3:13). Also he taught them that the experience of sanctification or holiness would fortify and support them against yielding to temptation and committing sin. There is no experience of grace in this life that would make it impossible to sin, but the experience of sanctification makes sin less likely because it cleanses, fills, and empowers a Christian. It is a strong deterrent to wrongdoing and an added strength to right doing.

(b) They needed deliverance from the old man nature of sin.

Personifying sin as the "old man" is quite characteristic of the Apostle Paul (Rom. 6:6; Eph. 4:22; Col. 3:9). Indeed this is one of Paul's definitions of the old inherited corrupt human nature (Eph. 4:22). The apostle teaches that all are born with it (Eph. 2:3). Also he teaches that all still have it after conversion (I Cor. 3:1-3). Deliverance from the old carnal nature, called the "old man," was included in the crucifixion of Christ (Rom. 6:6). The experience of holiness removes the "old man" (Eph. 4:22-24). This old inherited, inborn sinful nature, called "the body of sin" or the "old man," must and can be destroyed through Christ (Rom. 6:6; 7:24-25). Christ provided for the destruction or removal of this body of sin with His own blood, and by the act of the baptism with the Holy Spirit makes it experientially real (Acts 15:8-9). This is the second work of grace, or sanctification.

(c) Paul found deliverance from indwelling sin.

That the law was insufficient for justification, the Apostle Paul proves in chapters three, four, and five. That the law is also insufficient for sanctification is shown in chapter seven. The seventh chapter is a section from the life experience of Paul when he was struggling for deliverance from the principle of indwelling sin under the law. He found by experience that the inherited corrupt principle of sin in him was in constant rebellion against the law of God, which his enlightened conscience taught him was holy, just, and good (Rom. 7:12, 21). The apostle further states in 8:7 that this indwelling sin principle or the carnal mind is rebellion against God and His government.

The true nature of the carnal mind is clearly seen through the Word of God and personal experience portrayed in this seventh chapter of Romans. In his struggle with the depravity of his nature Paul not only grew tired but miserable (7:24). The carnal nature within him felt like a dead body tied to a person as punishment. As conviction deepened, his desire increased for deliverance from indwelling sin (7:17, 20, 24). He saw and found deliverance in Jesus Christ (7:25). This cleansing experience is sanctification or the second work of grace. The Apostle Paul is a good illustration of the two works of grace in personal experience. He met Christ as his Sanctifier in the home of Judas in Damascus when under the leadership of Ananias he was filled with the Holy Ghost (Acts 9:10-17; 13:9).

(d) The perfect will of God needed.



In Rom. 12:2 the deep concern of the Apostle Paul for the Roman Christians was that they might experience and enjoy the complete will of God. He exhorted them to make a total consecration of their Christian selfhood to God by presenting themselves to God as living sacrifices. The apostle had in mind the Jewish burnt sacrifices as described in the first chapter of Leviticus. The burnt sacrifice was a consecration of the animal to die, not to live. Christian consecration is presenting the saved self to God as a living sacrifice. Whether for a living or a dying sacrifice, the spirit of complete consecration to God is the same. Indeed this full Christian consecration to God is a vital part of the perfect will of God for all Christians.

After urging the Christians at Rome to consecrate themselves completely to God, the apostle leads them on to think and to see that the next step was to be transformed. By being transformed the apostle meant they were to be restored to a pure heart and a holy nature. This divine act of restoration at the end of total consecration and faith is the second work of grace or entire sanctification. It is provided by the blood of Christ and wrought by the baptism with the Holy Ghost. As God's holy people they were to avoid conformity to the world (Rom. 12:2). They, like their Lord, would be in the world but not of the world. As one writer says, "By the world, Paul did not mean the beautiful world of nature, but the world of fallen human nature, acting itself out in the human family, fashioning the framework of human society in accordance with its own tendencies. It is the reign of the carnal mind." No Christian, much less a sanctified Christian, can or will fashion himself according to the pattern of this world. His pattern is Christ and the Christian way of life. As one authority said, "The Christian must never forget that as corruption extends to the whole man, so does sanctification" (see I Thess. 5:23-24).

The Apostle Paul tells all Christians in these first two verses of the twelfth chapter of Romans that the intelligent and rational thing for them to do is to present themselves wholly to God and trust Him to accept their consecration and sanctify them. In doing this the apostle assures them that the world would be less likely to press them into its mold and that they would be more likely to be victorious in their Christian life and in their unlikeness to the world about them.

Continuing this same line of thought, the apostle told the Christians at Rome in 15:16 that the gospel he preached to all Gentile Christians was that they should offer themselves in full consecration and faith to God and be sanctified by the Holy Spirit. This was the way acceptable to God for them and for all Christians. The experience of sanctification wrought by the Holy Spirit preceded by full consecration of the saved self to God and faith is the second work of grace and was basic teaching in the gospel preached by Paul, and indeed in all the Scriptures.

In sanctifying consecrating, believing Christians, the Holy Spirit cleanses them from the inherited principle of sin (the carnal mind) , fills them (fully occupies them) , and empowers them for even greater Christian witnessing.

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## 05 -- THE TWO WORKS OF GRACE IN THE CORINTHIAN LETTERS

In his second letter to the Corinthian church the Apostle Paul said, "And in this confidence I was minded to come unto you before, that ye might have a second benefit" (II Cor. 1:15). By this

statement the apostle was clearly saying that the Corinthians had the first grace and needed the second grace. That they had the first work of grace will be shown in the following statements as scriptural evidence.

## I. The First Work of Grace

### (a) They were believers.

In his second missionary journey the Apostle Paul and company reached southeastern Europe and the city of Corinth in southern Greece. Paul labored in Corinth for a year and a half. The story of his stay among the Corinthians is interestingly told by Luke in the eighteenth chapter of Acts. While Paul was preaching the gospel in Corinth, the record says: "And many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized" (Acts 18:8). This statement could only mean that many of the Corinthians accepted Christ as their personal Saviour and Christian baptism as the outward evidence thereof.

### (b) They had the grace of God.

In his first letter Paul said, "I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ" (I Cor. 1:4). By this statement the apostle testifies that many of the Corinthians had experienced the saving grace of God in Jesus Christ. As a result of this experience they had entered into the fellowship of Christ, their Lord (I Cor. 1:9).

### (c) They were in Christ.

I Cor. 1:30 reads: "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus." In his second letter, 5:17, the Apostle Paul said, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." Since these people were in Christ and new persons, the old sinful life was gone and they had entered the new Christian way of life.

### (d) They were babes in Christ.

A classic statement of the Apostle Paul is in his first Corinthian letter, which reads as follows: "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ" (I Cor. 3:1). As babes in Christ, these Corinthian Christians had experienced the birth of the Spirit, which Jesus said was necessary in order to enter into the kingdom of God (John 3:3-5).

### (e) They were the temple of God.

The Christian concept of the temple of God is not a particular building but a particular person. In his first letter, the apostle said, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the spirit of God dwelleth in you?" (I Cor. 3:16) As Christians they were the house of God, and God was living in His house.

### (f) They belonged to Christ.

Another evidence that these Corinthians had the first work of grace is that they belonged to Christ; for Paul said of them in his first letter that they were Christ's (I Cor. 3:23). They had given themselves to Christ and become His property.

(g) They were the church of God in Corinth.

In his first letter (1:2) , and in his second letter (1:1) , Paul called these Corinthians the church of God at Corinth. As individuals they were Christians according to all the submitted scriptural evidences, and as a group of saved persons Paul considered they were qualified collectively to be called the church of God at Corinth. Only saved persons compose the true Church (Acts 2:47). That they needed the second work of grace will next be considered, even though they were the Epistle of Christ written by the Holy Spirit (II Cor. 3:2-3).

## II. The Second Work of Grace

Although several scriptural proofs have been presented to show that the Corinthians were saved people and, as such, were in the experience of the first work of grace, the scriptural evidence is equally clear that they needed the second work of grace.

(a) They were yet carnal.

After describing the Corinthians as milk-drinking babes in Christ and therefore born of the Spirit, the Apostle Paul declared them to be yet carnal. I Cor. 3:3 says, "For ye are yet carnal." Kind but frank and revealing was this statement. They had a good experience of the first work of grace in regeneration, but that did not remove the carnal mind from their moral nature. They were Christians but carnal Christians. They had divine life, but they still had carnality. The carnal mind which they yet had, Paul declared to be an enemy to God, and rebellion or lawlessness against God (Rom. 8:7).

The first work of grace gave these Corinthian Christians a right attitude and relationship to Christ but did not purify their moral nature from the inherited rebellious principle of carnality. The removal of the carnal mind is beyond the purpose of the first work of grace; it only restrains it. These Corinthian Christians still had the carnal mind, not because they had done something wrong or had gotten it from their immediate environment, but they inherited it as a part of the corrupt moral nature of all the offspring of fallen Adam. Carnality is that inborn lawless sin principle, and is present by heredity in every member of Adam's race before and after conversion. It is removed only by the baptism with the Holy Ghost as a second work of grace (Acts 15:8-9; Rom. 15:16).

(b) They were jealous.

Although the Corinthian Christians clearly had the first work of grace, they still had in them the carnal mind, which was manifesting itself among them in jealousy (I Cor. 3:3). They were envious or jealous of each other in the church. This inner evil feeling among them toward one another was a troublemaker. Envy or jealousy moved the brothers of Joseph to mistreat him and finally sell him into Egypt (Gen. 37:1-36; 39:1-23; Acts 7:9). It was carnality in the black robe of

envy or jealousy that moved the Jewish leaders to give Christ a mock trial, to choose Barabbas instead of Christ, to cry out to the Roman governor Pilate to crucify Christ and then mock Him while hanging on the Cross; it nailed Him to the Cross.

This evil spirit of jealousy in carnality has destroyed countless homes, killed numberless individuals, and ruined churches. It is one cause of wars. Too many Corinthian Christians were yielding to this inner evil pressure for them to be good examples of high-level Christian living. In his first Corinthian letter (13:4), Paul said, "Charity [love] envieth not." The Corinthian Christians had love, but they needed perfect love to cast out envy.

(c) They were contentious.

In Paul's first Corinthian letter (3:3) he told the Christians that the carnal mind, still in them, was showing itself among them in contention, strife, quarrelsomeness, and debates. This was not just an honest difference of opinion but an ugly spirit in them. The wordy wrangling among them was causing discord and confusion in their church, which Paul called the church of God at Corinth. The carnal mind is the great disrupter of the Church.

(d) They were factious

Carnality in the Corinthian church was causing splits and divisions. They allowed their disagreements to make them partisan; this disrupted Christian friendships in the church. The carnal mind would not let them be charitable and patient with one another and thereby maintain a spirit of Christian unity. There developed four factions in the church (I Cor. 1:12). This was the perfect atmosphere and environment for a lot of ugly-spirited fussing which would reflect dishonor both on their Lord and on their church. This sort of conduct would lessen their influence and effectiveness in the community. Such damage as this is exactly what the devil and carnality wanted them to do. There is a cure and only one -- the baptism with the Holy Ghost in sanctifying power, which purifies the heart from carnality.

(e) They had "preacheritis."

"Preacheritis" is a deadly disease in the church if allowed room to expand (I Cor. 1:12; 3:4). For the church to love and appreciate her ministry is pleasing to God; but for a church to get to fussing, as the Corinthians were doing over her ministry, reveals a spirit not Christian and not pleasant to Christ as the Head of His Church. These Christians were the church of God at Corinth, but carnality was erupting among them over preachers. Neither Peter, Paul, nor Apollos seemed to be responsible for the fuss made over them. They couldn't help being the different types of preachers they were.

Paul tried hard to calm the troubled waters (I Cor. 1:12-13; 3:5-8). It is legitimate and Christian to prefer different types of preachers, but it is carnal to stay in a church and fuss when one doesn't get his way about his kind of preacher (I Cor. 3:4).

It is always in order for a church to follow the example of the first Christian church in its elections. When electing an apostle to succeed fallen Judas, the church first prayed, then voted as it

understood divine leadings (Acts 1:15-26). If this rule were always followed and election results accepted, there need never be any fuss over the ministry or anything else in the church.

(f) They were not spiritual.

Paul clearly teaches that a person can be a Christian and carnal at the same time. That this condition is not the Christian ideal nor represents the full offerings of the Christian gospel of deliverance from all sin is just as clearly taught by the Apostle Paul. Paul mentions the words spiritual and carnal in contrast to each other. They mean opposite things. To the apostle, babes in Christ were not determined by their physical or religious ages but by their religious or spiritual condition. Paul said he could not speak unto the Corinthian babes in Christ as unto spiritual because they were yet carnal (I Cor. 3:1-3). The Holy Spirit had worked in their hearts (II Cor. 3:2-3) and they had the Spirit dwelling in them as babes in Christ (I Cor. 3:16) but not in His fullness. In this first work of grace the Corinthian Christians had the beginnings of spirituality, but Paul could not call them spiritual as long as they had carnality.

The word spiritual refers to a vital and mystical relationship between the individual and God. Spiritual persons can be measured, not by any particular type of emotional manifestation or dress, but by the extent to which the Holy Spirit cleanses them, indwells them, possesses them, controls them, and works in and through them in outward holy and useful Christian living. The carnal mind in all regenerated persons is what keeps them from becoming spiritual, according to Pauline teaching. He would call all persons spiritual who have been delivered from carnality. This would not mean they could not enjoy endless growth in grace and Christian character building.

(g) They were not holy.

The Corinthian Christians had the beginning of holiness, for they had the Spirit of holiness in them (I Cor. 3:16; 6:19; II Cor. 6:16). They still had the unholy, lawless, inherited carnal mind, showing itself among them in unholy manifestations. This is why they needed the second work of grace. They were the temple of God but they were not the clean and pure temple of God, for they had not yet been cleansed from all moral uncleanness.

In II Chron. 29:16-18 the priests reported to King Hezekiah that they had gone into the Temple and brought out all the uncleanness found there. In doing this they told the king that they had made an end to cleansing or sanctifying the house of the Lord. This is a picture of what the Corinthian Christians needed. In II Cor. 7:1 the Apostle Paul told the Corinthians that they needed the experience of holiness to cleanse them from all their moral and spiritual filthiness. The apostle assured them that this experience is based on the promises of God for all His children. Perfecting holiness would mean to them bringing an end to all their carnal uncleanness by the divine act of cleansing. This is wrought by the baptism with the Holy Ghost. This would mean, not the first, but the second, work of grace. After getting into the experience of holiness by the second work of grace they could experience continuous growth in holiness, ever approaching "the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Eph. 4:11-13).

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## 06 -- THE TWO WORKS OF GRACE IN THE EPHESIAN LETTER

The city of Ephesus was an ancient Greek city on the western coast of Asia Minor, now Turkey. It was an important political, commercial, and religious center. Also, Ephesus was the political capital of the Roman province of Asia in Asia Minor. Too, it was the most important commercial city of Asia Minor. It was celebrated for its Temple of Diana, one of the seven wonders of the world.

From this Ephesian city of Asia many devout Jews and proselytes came to the annual centuries-old Pentecost commemoration at Jerusalem. These devout Jews and Greeks from Asia, like many others out of every nation under heaven, heard the Christian message for the first time in their own language on this Pentecost day (Acts 2:5-9, 11). This experience helped lay the foundation for later Christian effort among them when they returned to their home countries.

The city of Ephesus and the Jewish synagogue there were briefly visited by the Apostle Paul for the first time during the closing days of his second missionary journey (Acts 18:11-22). The Jews and proselytes of the synagogue there were very friendly and responsive to the message of Paul. They even urged him to remain longer (Acts 18:19-21). In the providence of God the apostle did return on his third evangelistic tour and spent three years among them, founding and establishing the first Christian church in Ephesus (Acts 19:1). This church became one of the outstanding early Christian churches. From a prison in Rome Paul wrote his Ephesian letter about A.D. 61 or 62. It is thought that the Apostle John spent his last years at Ephesus in the fellowship of the church there.

The two works of grace in the Ephesian letter will now be considered separately.

### I. The First Work of Grace

(a) Twelve Ephesians early received Christian baptism.

The John the Baptist movement was an important transition movement between the Old and New Testaments. John was the prophetic link connecting the two. He preached repentance, the first coming of Christ, and the baptism with the Holy Ghost (Matt. 3:1-12). His message had its roots in the Old Testament. The Jewish church had departed from this divine message of their Bible (the Old Testament), and so God called John to straighten out these old, well-beaten paths of neglected truths to better prepare the way for the coming and ministry of His Son (Matt. 3:1-3). Many Jews genuinely repented of their sins and were forgiven and received the baptism of repentance at the hand of John as a testimony and outward evidence thereof (Matt. 3: 5-6; Mark 1:4-5; Luke 3:2-3).

On arriving at Ephesus, Paul found twelve John the Baptist disciples ready for Christian baptism because of their faith in Christ. The apostle administered to them Christian baptism as an outward testimony to their faith in and acceptance of Christ (Acts 18:1-7). These disciples were the first to profess Christ in Ephesus.

(b) Paul went from the synagogue to the schoolhouse.

During Paul's three months' ministry in the synagogue at Ephesus many members of the Jewish synagogue accepted the message of Paul and became Christian disciples (Acts 19:8-9). These disciples naturally sided with Paul in the synagogue dispute and followed the apostle out of the synagogue into the school building (Acts 19:9). Thus these Jewish disciples were willing to separate themselves from their synagogue and take their stand with Paul. The number of these Jewish disciples won to Christ in the synagogue is not known but they became the second group of Christians added to the church. Thus the church of Ephesus was on the march even among the fires of persecution and under the human leadership of Paul.

(c) Many believed.

During the two-year ministry of Paul in the Ephesian schoolhouse, all the people of Asia, including Ephesus, heard the gospel (Acts 19:10). Ephesus was a large city with a great mixture of peoples. There was a large number of Jews there plus a larger number of Hellenistic Gentiles of many races with their cult worship. Ephesus was a stronghold of Eastern magic. Indeed it was a center of the magical arts of the East. From house to house and in the school of Tyrannus, Paul preached the gospel. Such was the effect of his preaching that many sorcerers and famous magicians believed, confessed their sins, and brought together their books used in their magical arts and burned them before all the people (Acts 19:18-19). The price of the books was fifty thousand pieces of silver or about \$25,000.

Again it could be said with Paul that the gospel "is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth" (Rom. 1:16). No wonder then that Paul was not ashamed of the gospel of Christ! Paul told the Corinthians in II Cor. 5:17 that if any man accepts Christ he becomes a new creation; old things pass away, and all things become new. This was proven true in the experience of the magicians. The way to a new life begins with a new person. So powerful was the spiritual revolution wrought by the gospel in Ephesus that mob violence was raised against Paul for fear that the whole city would be turned upside down spiritually. Paul almost became a victim of the mob but was providentially spared (Acts 19:23-41). When Christ comes, many things will be destroyed by fire or otherwise. This third group of believers were won to Christ and the church during the two-year ministry of Paul in the school of Tyrannus and from house to house. Indeed the gospel and the church were increasingly dynamic spiritual forces in the life of the city of Ephesus and surrounding country.

(d) The church of God.

After his three years of labor in Ephesus, Paul decided to return to Jerusalem by way of Macedonia and Greece (Acts 20:1-3). This closing, third missionary journey led him from Macedonia to Troas and down the Aegean seacoast by way of the city of Miletus (Acts 20:4-15). Paul did not feel led to stop again at Ephesus and so passed it up (Acts 20:16). From Miletus, Paul sent to Ephesus and called for the elders of the church there to come and meet with him (Acts 20:17). His meeting with the Ephesian elders was one of the most important church board meetings of all Christian history (Acts 20:17-38). The apostle took them into his confidence and unveiled to them his great soul and vision. He described his work among them and warned them of future danger to their church. He reminded these elders that they were the divinely selected overseers of their church at Ephesus and therefore had the first responsibility to guard and preserve the spiritual

interests of the church there (Acts 20:28). With great emphasis he reminded this group that they were the elders of the church of God at Ephesus which He had purchased with His own blood (Acts 20:28).

The Ephesians in the church certainly had the first work of grace if together they were the Blood-bought church of God, as Paul said they were. Being the church of God at Ephesus, they were the body of Christ in Ephesus (Eph. 1:22-23). They were indeed the household of God built upon the foundation of Christ, the prophets, and the apostles (Eph. 2:19-20).

(e) From spiritual death to spiritual life.

In different parts of his letter to the Ephesians, Paul describes their life of sin before they found Christ and became Christians. In Eph. 2:2 the apostle reminds them that in time past they "walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air" (the devil) and the spirit working "in the children of disobedience." In 4:25 neighbor practiced lying to neighbor. In 4:26 their temper boiled over in anger. In 4:28 they indulged in stealing. In 4:29 filthy talk proceeded out of their mouths. In 4:31 their lives were poisoned with bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor (loud quarreling), and evil speaking. In 5:3-5 they practiced fornication, all kinds of uncleanness, covetousness, filthy and foolish talk, and deception. While the Ephesians were sinners, living in sin, they were "without hope in the world" (Eph. 2:12). They were spiritually dead (Eph. 2:1); at that time they did not know Christ (Eph. 2:12).

Against this background of lostness and hopelessness Paul presented to them the gospel of good news. The apostle told them that Christ by shedding His own blood had made of himself the redemptive Sacrifice to God which made possible the forgiveness of all their sins (Eph. 1:7; 2:13; 5:2). As Paul preached to the Ephesians the gospel of their salvation, many of them believed and were forgiven of their sins (Eph. 1:13; 4:32). So great was the change wrought in them when they accepted Christ that Paul called it a spiritual resurrection (Eph. 2:1, 5-6). They were changed from a state of spiritual death to a state of spiritual life. This crisis experience from spiritual death to spiritual life was another proof of the first work of grace in them.

## II. The Second Work of Grace

(a) Twelve Ephesians early received the Holy Spirit.

One of the main doctrines in the teaching and preaching of John the Baptist was the baptism with the Holy Ghost (Matt. 3:11). This same doctrine was taught by prophets in the Old Testament. John told his disciples that he baptized them with water unto repentance but that there was coming One after him who would baptize them with the Holy Ghost and with fire (Matt. 3:11). This coming One was Christ. In Acts 1:5, Jesus told His disciples that John baptized with water but that within a few days they would be baptized with the Holy Ghost. This Spirit baptism became the experience of the 120 disciples in the Upper Room as recorded in the second chapter of Acts.

In Acts 4:31 another group of Jewish disciples experienced this same baptism with the Holy Ghost. In Acts 8:14-17 a group of Samaritan disciples experienced it. In Acts 9:17; 13:9, converted Saul of Tarsus received the promised baptism. In Acts 10:44-47 and 11:15-17, Gentile



believers had the same experience. In Acts 19:1-7 twelve John the Baptist disciples and Christians in Ephesus received the promised Christ baptism of the Spirit. They received the baptism with the Holy Spirit under the human leadership of the Apostle Paul after they had believed on Christ and had received Christian water baptism at the hands of Paul. This was the second work of grace for them.

The effect of the baptism with the Holy Ghost was the same. They were cleansed (hearts purified); they were filled (fully occupied); and empowered for greater Christian service (Acts 15:8-9; 2:4; 1:8). The twelve John the Baptist disciples in faraway Ephesus told Paul that they had heard nothing of the Holy Spirit, even though His baptism was a part of the original message of their human founder, John (Acts 19:2). This proves that this truth of the baptism with the Holy Spirit can and will be lost when not clearly and definitely preached. At first the John the Baptist movement was a second-blessing holiness movement, but it ceased to be such when it ceased to preach the baptism with the Holy Ghost and fire. It has always been the case that when truth is not preached it is lost.

(b) Sanctification is the inheritance of all Christians.

Paul told the Ephesian elders in Acts 20:32 that sanctification was the rightful possession of all Christians as members of the family of Christ. The apostle reminded them that many Christians already enjoyed this spiritual inheritance and so could they. It was a present experience that they and all Christians could enter into as their rightful spiritual inheritance. Sanctification is the second work of grace and is for saved persons only.

(c) Holiness is the eternal choice of God for His people. In his letter to the Ephesian church in 1:4, Paul reminds them that even before the foundation of the world God had made the choice that His people could and should be holy in and through Christ. Holiness then is the fixed purpose of God for all of His saved people. God is holy and wants all of His saved people to be like himself here and now (I Pet. 1:15-16). To be made holy is the second work of grace and is wrought by the baptism with the Holy Spirit when Christians fully consecrate all to God and trust Him to accept their consecration and make them holy.

(d) Sanctification in the atonement for all Christians.

Sanctification means both consecration and cleansing. Consecration and faith is the Christian's part; cleansing is God's part in sanctification.

Just as God (the Father) loved the world and gave His only begotten Son to save the world, God (the Son) loved the Church and gave himself for the Church to sanctify the Church (John 3:16-17; Eph. 5:25-26). In sanctification Christ unifies and harmonizes the Church with His holy nature and will, just as marriage makes husband and wife one (John 17:17-21; Eph. 5:22-23). According to Paul in his Ephesian letter, it is a religious experience only for the Church as the body of Christ, "the household of God," and the "habitation of God through the Spirit" (Eph. 1:22-23; 2:19, 21-22; 5:25-26). Sanctification is in the atonement for all Christians because Christ died and shed His blood that He might sanctify His Church (Eph. 5:25-26; Heb. 13:12). Salvation is for the world (sinners). Sanctification is for the Church (Christians). The first work of grace

(regeneration) is for the penitent, believing sinner; the second work of grace (sanctification) is for the consecrating, believing Christian. These two works of grace are made necessary because of the two kinds of sin -- the act of sin and the inherited, corrupt principle of sin. Both works of grace are in the atonement of Christ.

(e) From the old nature to the new nature.

Under the figure of the old man and the new man Paul pictures two positive natures (Eph. 4:22-24; Col. 3:9-10). The old nature is positively evil and the new nature is positively good. The old nature is corrupt according to its deeds; the new nature is the image or likeness of God (Eph. 4:22, 24; Col. 3:9-10). The old nature is that moral corruption of nature transmitted through birth to all the offspring of fallen Adam (Gen. 5:3; 6:5; 8:21; Ps. 51:5; Eph. 2:3). It is that inborn bent toward rebellion and acts of sin against God. Paul often calls it the flesh or carnal nature. Paul admonished the Ephesian Christians to put off the old corrupt nature which they still had and put on the nature of righteousness and true holiness (Eph. 4:22-24; Col. 3:9-10). Putting off the inherited corrupt moral nature, called the old man, and putting on the holy nature of God, called the new man, is the act of God in cooperation with His consecrating and believing child. This Cleansing, purifying act of God is wrought by the baptism with the Holy Spirit (Matt. 3:11; Acts 1:4-5; 2:4; 15:8-9). This experience of cleansing, filling, and empowering with the Holy Spirit is the second work of grace. This experience also is known by various terms such as: Christian perfection, perfect love, heart purity, the baptism with the Holy Spirit, the fullness of the blessing, Christian holiness, and sanctification.

(f) "Be filled with the Spirit."

In his Ephesian letter (5:18), the Apostle Paul said, "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit." The birth of the Spirit is for penitent, believing sinners; and the baptism with the Spirit is for consecrating, believing Christians. In Acts 1:4-5, Jesus told His disciples to wait in Jerusalem for the promise of the Father, the baptism with the Holy Ghost, which He would give to them not many days hence. While Jesus returned to heaven, His disciples did wait in the Upper Room for Him to send the promised Holy Spirit to them (John 16:7; Acts 1:9-14; 2:33). All of the disciples waiting in the Upper Room did receive the promised baptism with the Holy Spirit when the Day of Pentecost was fully come (Acts 2:1-4, 33).

When the waiting, praying, believing, and consecrating disciples did receive the baptism with the Holy Ghost, Luke said, "They were all filled with the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:4). In writing up the testimony of the Apostle Peter, Luke quotes Peter as saying: "And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them [the Gentiles] witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us [Jews]; and put no difference between us [Jews] and them [Gentiles], purifying their hearts by faith" (Acts 15:8-9). According to Peter, then, the baptism with the Holy Spirit brings cleansing to all Christians. According to Luke, the baptism with the Holy Spirit fills all Christians. According to Jesus, all Christians also receive power to witness when baptized with the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8). All who are cleansed are filled and empowered. All who are filled are cleansed and empowered. This is true because all three conditions are the collective effect of receiving the baptism with the Holy Spirit.

Many refillings of the Spirit are no more Scriptural than many re-cleansings or re-empowerings. As long as a Christian has the experience of the baptism with the Holy Spirit, that Christian has a pure heart, that Christian is filled or fully occupied with God, that Christian has the power or strength to bear witness to Christ anywhere and at any time. All Christians who have the baptism with the Holy Ghost have the Holy Ghost. All who have a pure heart have the Holy Ghost; all who are filled have the Holy Ghost; all who are empowered have the Holy Ghost. This is true because, when the Holy Spirit comes in His fullness, His coming does all these things in and for the consecrating, believing Christian as the second work of grace. The Apostle Paul knew that some of the Ephesian church had been filled with the Holy Spirit, but he wanted the whole church to be sanctified, because it was their spiritual inheritance and it was in the atonement for them. He wanted all of them to be holy, because that was the choice of God for them. The apostle wanted all the church to be cleansed from the old inherited corrupt carnal nature and have the image of God re-created in them. He urged, by command, that part of the Ephesian church and all Christians not filled with the Spirit go on and be filled. In doing this he was following the teachings and experiences of all the apostles and first Christians, including himself (Acts 9:17; 13:9).

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## 07 -- THE TWO WORKS OF GRACE IN THE THESSALONIAN LETTERS

The Apostle Paul was the greatest early pioneer in the Christian crusade for souls. His first evangelistic crusade is recorded in the thirteenth and fourteenth chapters of Acts. It covered the island of Cypress and large sections of Asia Minor, now Turkey. His second crusade was even greater than the first. It covered those parts of Asia Minor reached by the first crusade and parts of southeastern Europe. The record of it is in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth chapters of the Acts. Paul was divinely led from Asia into Europe. He was the first Christian missionary to reach Europe. The Lord leads his people through the written Word, providential circumstances, reason or judgment, and by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit clearly led Paul to go into Europe (Acts 16:1-12). He departed by ship from the ancient and historic city of Troas in Asia Minor and went across the Aegean Sea to Macedonia in northern Greece and Europe. Philippi was the first important city in Europe visited by Paul and company. Here he conducted his first great European revival. The story of this first revival and first Christian church in southeastern Europe is told in the sixteenth chapter of Acts. The second important city visited, and where a revival was conducted in Europe, was Thessalonica of Macedonia. The story of this second revival and church is told in the seventeenth chapter of Acts.

Now let us look for the two works of grace in the two letters later written by Paul to this important Christian church.

### I. The First Work Of Grace

(a) They heard and believed.

As the Apostle Paul preached Jesus Christ in the synagogue, the record says some of the Jews and a great multitude of devout Greek men and women believed (Acts 17:3-4). In his first letter to the Thessalonian church (1:5) , the apostle says to them, "For our gospel came not unto

you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance." Also in 2:13, Paul says, "For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe." As Paul preached the gospel to the Thessalonians in the power of the Holy Ghost, the Word was effectual in their minds and hearts, turning them into believers. This is another affirmation of Paul's statement in Rom. 1:16, that the gospel "is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." Hearing the gospel is the first step in a person's salvation.

(b) They turned from sin to God.

In I Thess. 1:9 the record says, "For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God." Under the sin-convicting gospel preaching of Paul, the Thessalonians experienced in their hearts and lives the necessary turning away from all sin and turning to God. The way people turn determines what they get. These Thessalonians no longer served sin, but God. Conviction is the second step in a person's salvation.

(c) They became followers of the Lord.

After hearing the gospel preached in the power of the Holy Ghost they were deeply convicted, and turning from sin to serve God, they began following the Lord and the apostle (I Thess. 1:6). This represented the radical change that had taken place in their hearts and lives. When they became new persons in Christ, the old sinful life was gone and they began the new Christian life of following the Lord. Jesus said the tree was known by its fruit. The life is the most revealing thing about a Christian. A changed life is the best proof of a changed person. They had the Lord and His human leaders and people for their Christian companions and associates.

(d) They had faith, love, and patience.

In his first letter (1:3) Paul said, "Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father." They had faith that worked and love that labored in doing the work of their Lord. They were not passive but active Christians. The willingness of a person to do what he can in helping to carry on the work of the Lord is strong proof of the genuineness of his Christian experience. They had patience not to get discouraged in persecution and Christian effort, even when results were not satisfactory. They still hoped and worked for better things.

(e) They were missionary-minded.

They not only had Paul for an example but they had the same spirit of Christ that was in Paul, constraining them. For I Thess. 1:8 reads, "For from YOU sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to Godward is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak any thing." They continued faithful in the work at home but they also had a desire to share Christ with others beyond home. They were unselfish stewards of the gospel that had wrought so much change in them.

(f) They were good Christian examples.

Verse seven of chapter one in the first letter reads as follows: "So that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia." In all their living they were good samples of the transforming grace of God revealed in the gospel. The whole of their lives was a challenge and inspiration to all other Christians.

(g) They were the church at Thessalonica.

In Matt. 16:18, Jesus said He would build His Church. His Church would be the eternal fruit of His redemptive work. In his first Corinthian letter (12:12-27), Paul said the Church was the body of Christ composed of the union of many members. Again in Eph. 1:22-23, the Apostle Paul said the Church was the body of Christ, and over this body Christ was the Head. In Eph. 2:19-22, Paul called the Church the "habitation of God through the Spirit." In Matt. 5:13-16, Jesus called His Church "the salt of the earth" and "the light of the world." The Church is the only body of Christ on earth, the only habitation of God on earth, the only spiritual salt and light on earth. In I Thess. 1:1 and II Thess. 1:1, Paul said the Thessalonian Christians, collectively, were "the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ." Through the Church the work of Christ would be conserved and extended. Paul, like his Lord, emphasized the importance of the Church. In all of his labors in every place the apostle sought to win souls to Christ and to organize them into a church. He was the great church builder of the first Christian century. In this way Paul did more than any other Christian to establish and perpetuate Christianity.

After having presented the above seven proofs of the first work of grace in the experience of the Thessalonian Christians, we will next consider the second work of grace.

## II. The Second Work of Grace

No one can read the record in the Thessalonian letters and doubt that the Thessalonians were clearly Christians. Definitely and clearly they experienced the first work of grace. In these letters Paul makes it equally clear that these Thessalonians did not have but needed the second work of grace. Paul's stay in Thessalonica was short but effective. He did organize there one of the best New Testament churches. But due to severe opposition he left before his work was finished. In his first letter (3:10) he says he is earnestly praying that he might see their faces again and complete their Christian teaching. He had not been able, due to shortness of time among them, to instruct them as fully as he desired. To Paul, Christianity was a doctrine as well as an experience and a life. In his letters to the Thessalonian Christians the Apostle Paul told them of a second experience for them as Christians that he called sanctification.

(a) Sanctification was the will of God for them.

There are the human and the divine sides of sanctification. The human side is consecration and faith. The divine side is to purify, to make holy. In his first letter (4:3), Paul said to the Thessalonian Christians, "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification." The Thessalonians were saved but they were not sanctified. But God, who had saved them, willed or desired their

sanctification. God's will for the sinner is to repent, believe, and be saved. God's will for the Christian is to consecrate all of his saved self to God, believe, and be sanctified. According to the Apostle Paul, persons do not get sanctified when they get saved, but that sanctification is a second definite work of grace and is in the will of God for all His saved children. All saved persons should walk in the light and get sanctified when they learn that this experience is the will of God for them. Otherwise they will seriously endanger their first experience of grace with disobedience and rejection.

(b) Sanctification was the choice of God for them.

In his second Thessalonian letter (2:13) Paul said, "But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth." According to this statement of the apostle, sanctification is the eternal choice of God for all His beloved children as a part of their salvation; it is wrought by the Holy Spirit as the second work of the Spirit just as the birth of the Spirit is wrought by the Holy Spirit, as the first work of the Spirit. Sanctification, then, is not only the will of God but the eternal choice of God for all His saved children. All real Christians, therefore, should make this second experience their will and eternal choice. The human will and choice should coincide completely with the divine will and choice.

(e) Sanctification was the call of God to them.

In his first Thessalonian letter (4:7) the apostle said, "For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness [or sanctification]." Sanctification is not only the will of God and choice of God for all His saved people, but it is also the call of God to all born-again Christians, according to Paul. Sanctification is the opposite of uncleanness. It is the second experience of grace that removes all remaining uncleanness from the moral nature of every converted child of God. The carnal nature (the inherited and inborn sin principle) must be and can be removed from the moral nature of every true Christian; and the practice of sin must be and can be removed from the life of every sinner saved by grace when he is born of the Spirit, which experience puts a stop to the practice of sin (I John 3:9-10). When the truly born-again Christian consecrates completely all of his selfhood to Christ for time and eternity and trusts Christ, He will purify his moral nature from all carnal uncleanness by sanctifying or baptizing him with the Holy Ghost (Acts 1:5; 2:4; 15:8-9; Rom. 12:1; 15:16; I Thess. 4:7). Anyone rejecting this experience rejects God, according to Paul (I Thess. 4:8).

(d) Sanctification was the establishing grace to them.

In I Thess. 3:13, Paul said to the Thessalonian Christians, "To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable [or blameless] in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints." Paul not only emphasized sanctification as the will and choice of God for these Thessalonian Christians, and also the call of God to them, but he emphasized it as the establishing experience in their hearts. The Apostle Paul not only saw the experience of holiness as the establishing act of God but also as the only spiritual state in which Christians could be settled and fixed in freedom from internal spiritual distractions. In Jas. 1:8 we read, "A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways." James means to say that the

double-minded man is not stable, is not firm, is not constant; is fluctuating, irregular, and unsteady. In Gal. 5:17, Paul points out the cause of the inner spiritual distraction and the resulting instability of converted persons. He says, "For the flesh [carnal mind] lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot [or may not] do the things that ye would [or desire]." These two contrary forces -- the Spirit and the flesh (carnal mind) -- are opposite in their desires and directions and thus give rise to an inner spiritual conflict. James, in harmony with Paul, saw holiness or sanctification as God's establishing grace. In Jas. 4:8 we read, "Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye doubleminded." On this verse, Adam Clarke says, "Doublemindedness is an uncleanness that must be removed. As a man is a sinner, he must have his hands cleansed from wicked works; as he is doubleminded, he must have his heart sanctified." No Christian can be spiritually established as long as the carnal mind remains in the moral nature. The divine act of entire sanctification, that purifies the heart from the carnal mind, removes double-mindedness and therefore produces spiritual stability in the Christian life. This is the establishment that Paul and James were talking about. Also Jesus prayed in the seventeenth chapter of John that His children be sanctified, in order that they might be one in and with Him, and the Father, in holy nature and holy purpose. Sanctification unifies Christian personality, both within itself and with the divine.

(e) Sanctification was the work of God in them.

The Apostle Paul not only assured the Thessalonian Christians that sanctification was the will of God for them, that it was the choice of God for them, that it was the call of God to them, that it was the establishment of God for them, but also that it was the work of God in them. In the following words of Paul he makes it clear that sanctification was God's work in them: "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Thess. 5:23). The word sanctify in this verse not only means "to set apart, to consecrate," but it also means "to cleanse, to purify." To consecrate and believe is the human side and part in sanctification (Rom. 12:1-2; Matt. 23:19). To cleanse, to purify is God's part in sanctification (I Thess. 5:23; Acts 15:8-9). These Thessalonian Christians, by consecrating themselves completely to God and trusting Him, would experience God as their Cleanser and Purifier. Paul reminds these Thessalonians also that sanctification was God's unifying grace (spirit, soul, and body) and preserving grace, even unto the coming of the Lord. Because of this, sanctified Christians have a resisting and standing strength that unsanctified Christians do not have.

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## 08 -- THE TWO WORKS OF GRACE IN THE PETRINE LETTERS

The Apostle Peter addresses his two letters to the strangers scattered throughout the countries of Asia Minor, now Turkey (I Pet. 1:1). Long before Christ, the Jews experienced many dispersions from Palestine for many different reasons. By the time of Christ most Jews outside of Palestine lived in the countries surrounding the Mediterranean Sea. These Jews considered themselves sojourners in strange lands. Many were scattered throughout Asia Minor and this is why Peter could write his letters to the scattered strangers and sojourners there.

In his first missionary crusade recorded in Acts 13 and 14 the apostle penetrated deeply into Asia Minor with the gospel. Many Jews and Gentiles were won to Christ and churches were established. Also, on his second evangelistic crusade recorded in Acts, Paul went through Asia Minor the second time before going on to southeastern Europe. The Apostle Paul later wrote some of his most important letters to the Christian Jews and Gentiles of Asia Minor. To these same Christians the Apostle Peter wrote his two letters. It is not known for certain whether or not Peter ever labored with, or visited in person, the Christians of Asia Minor to whom he wrote his letters.

In his second letter (1:4) Peter told these Asia Minor Christians that they were partakers of the divine nature and had thereby experienced the fulfillment of the great and precious promises of God. This kind of inner experience God had promised and given to them. Christianity is a doctrine, an experience, and a life. That God had shared himself with these Asian Christians was the fulfillment of His supreme promise in Christ to them and to all others who would accept Christ as Redeemer. Yes, they were partakers of the divine nature in personal experience. The meaning of this will be seen better in the two works of grace revealed in the two letters of the Apostle Peter. The following discussion will seek to show that they had experienced both the life of God and the holiness of God.

## I. The First Work of Grace

### (a) They were born again.

In his first letter (1:23) the apostle said, "Being born again, not of corruptible [human] seed, but of incorruptible [seed], by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." Jesus said to Nicodemus in John 3:7, "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again." These Asia Minor Christians had experienced that which Nicodemus needed, according to Jesus. Jesus also explained to Nicodemus that the born-again experience was the work of the Spirit (John 3:8). Adam Clarke said, "In our regeneration Christ himself is communicated to us, so that the deity thenceforth dwells in us as a temple, and we are thus made partakers of the divine nature." These Asia Minor Christians were born-again Christians by the birth of the Spirit, which is the first-work-of-grace experience.

### (b) They were newborn babes.

In I Pet. 2:2 the apostle said, "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." This is the description of these and all born-again Christians. The birth of the Spirit experience makes new persons out of all. Christians do not get their nourishment from the world but they live and grow by the milk of the Word of God.

### (c) They believed on and loved Christ.

In the first letter (1:8) the apostle said, "Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." Most Christians, like those in Asia Minor, have never seen the Lord in person yet have experienced the unspeakable joy of believing on and loving Him. All such persons have the life of God in them (John 1:4; 3:15-16; 4:10; 6:40, 47; I John 2:25; 5:11-12).



(d) They were living stones.

In the first letter (2:5) Peter said, "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." These Asia Minor Jews and Gentiles became lively or living stones by tasting of the great living Stone -- Christ (I Pet. 2:34). Sharing His life with them made them to live spiritually, which is the meaning of a real Christian experience.

After having presented the above four scriptural proofs that the Asia Minor Christians had experienced the first work of grace, let us next consider the second work of grace.

## II. The Second Work of Grace

In the first letter (1:2), the Apostle Peter said, "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied." In their born-again experience the Holy Spirit had delivered these Asia Minor Christians from the corrupt practice of sin and put the life and love of God in them (I Pet. 1:14; 2:1-2; II Pet. 1:4; John 4:13-14; I John 3:9-10; I Pet. 2:3-5; 1:8; Rom. 5:5). In their sanctification the Holy Spirit had delivered them from the inherited moral corruption of nature in the world and put within them the holy nature of God (I Pet. 1:15-16; II Pet. 1:4). The Holy Spirit was the active Agent in their sanctification (Rom. 15:16; I Pet. 1:2; Heb. 13:12). The blood of Christ was the provisional basis of it (I Pet. 1:2, 18-19). Again the apostle declared in I Pet. 1:22 that the souls of these Asia Minor Christians had been purified (sanctified) and that they loved with pure (sanctified) hearts. A pure-heart experience was what the Apostle Peter and the other 120 disciples received on the Day of Pentecost when they were baptized with the Holy Ghost (Acts 15:8-9). This was the testimony of Peter. This same experience is for all Christians today who will completely consecrate their lives to Christ and trust Him to sanctify them.

## III. The Two Works of Grace Plus Growth in Grace

It is the hope of the writer that sufficient scriptural evidence has been given to show that the Asia Minor Christians had clearly experienced the two works of grace.

In the first work of grace sins were forgiven and the life and love of God came into their hearts. In the second work of grace they were delivered from the inborn principle of sin, known as the carnal mind, and received pure hearts. Both experiences were provided by the blood of Christ and wrought by the Holy Spirit. The practice of sin ceased in the first work of grace. The presence of the indwelling inherited principle of sin ceased in the second work of grace. The two works of grace remedied the personal sin problem, whether act or principle, and re-created in these Christians the divine image of righteousness and true holiness by their partaking of the divine nature.

But however great these two Spirit-wrought experiences of regeneration and sanctification may be, they are only two of the necessary steps in the divine process of completely christianizing

the Christian selfhood and personality. "The measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (the perfect Man) is the divine goal toward which all Christian experience and growth in grace point and are directed. Hence Peter admonished these Asia Christians to "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" in addition to their religious experience (II Pet. 1:4-10; 3:18). Experience has its place and growth in grace has its place in the divine process goal of complete likeness to the perfect Man, Christ Jesus. In II Pet. 1:4-5 the apostle told these Christians that beside partaking of the divine nature and escaping the corruption in the world through lust, they were diligently to make certain growth additions of Christian character to their religious experience. If religious experience is to endure and never be lost, it must be supplied and reinforced, according to Peter, with some basic Christian character growth in such elements as faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and Charity or love.

These character qualities in fullness are not inherent in Christian experience, but Christian experience cannot endure without their development and support. Only the religious soil and seed for their growth and development are in religious experience. The failure to recognize the importance of the growth side as well as the experience side to the Christian has produced, across the centuries, much spiritual weakness and retrogression. This explains much poor religious expression in life. In II Pet. 1:8 the apostle said to these Asia Minor Christians, "For if these things [graces] be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." By the word abound in this verse, the apostle means that there can be limitless increase and growth in the graces previously mentioned. He also said to these Christians that if they sought diligently to abound in these graces they would always be fruitful Christians and never fall (II Pet. 1:8, 10). Any Christian going forward (growing) can never go backward nor stand still. These Christian graces join hands in giving Christian experience and personality better Christian expression in Christian life. The better they are developed, the better will Christian life be expressed. Christian life is the combination of Christian experience and these Christian graces (or Christian character) working together.

If character is the aggregate of certain qualities belonging to any individual, Christian character is the aggregate of certain qualities belonging to an individual Christian. Separately, these graces or qualities as mentioned by the Apostle Peter and their relation to Christian experience and Christian life will next be considered.

#### (a) "Faith"

Faith in general is neither an inheritance nor an attainment but an acquisition. Faith is one of the basics in all human progress and orderly living. As used by the Apostle Peter in II Pet. 1:5, faith means belief or trust. A divinely convicted and repentant sinner is saved by an act of faith in Christ as Saviour when aided by the Holy Spirit (Acts 13:39; Rom. 5:1; Gal. 3:26; 4:6; Rom. 8:15). A divinely convicted and consecrating Christian is sanctified by an act of faith in Christ as Sanctifier, when aided by the Holy Spirit (Matt. 23:19; Rom. 12:1-2; Acts 2:1-4; Eph. 5:25-27; Heb. 2:11; 13:12-13; Acts 26:18; Rom. 15:16).

In II Cor. 5:7, Paul said, Christians walk by faith. In the eleventh chapter of Hebrews, Paul teaches that God's people live and work by faith. In religion, then, faith is basic. In II Thess. 1:3, Paul saw the faith of the Thessalonians growing exceedingly. In Rom. 4:19-20, Paul said that

Abraham was not weak in faith but strong in faith when he believed God would give him a son according to His promise. According to Paul, then, faith can grow, and can be weak or strong.

Likewise the Apostle Peter commands Christians to grow in the grace of faith. This word faith as used by Peter also means faithfulness, which is being steady, reliable, and dependable in the church and in the cause of Christ. A growing Christian is growing in faith. Faith grows by spiritual nourishment and exercise. There can be no Christian experience or Christian life without faith, and as faith grows, both experience and life will be enriched and reinforced. In Paul's discussion of the whole armor of God, he said, "Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked" (Eph. 6:16). Jesus said that faith the size of a grain of mustard seed could remove mountains of difficulty (Matt. 17:20). To see some of the great things wrought by faith, read the record in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews. Yes, faith grows by spiritual nourishment and exercise.

(b) "Virtue"

By virtue, here, Peter means courage. Courage was one of the outstanding traits and requirements of a Roman soldier. The Apostle Paul also emphasized the importance of courage in all Christians (ministry and laity) when he said to Timothy in II Tim. 2:3-4, "Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier." The Apostle Peter means to teach that courage is an essential quality in Christian character if there is to be the element of firmness and moral stability in Christian experience and life. This grace must take its essential place among the eight graces mentioned by Peter if there is to be a well-rounded, fruitful Christian life and character. The apostle encourages harmonious growth in all these character graces if there is to be sufficient protection for Christian experience and life. Courage, too, grows by spiritual nourishment and exercise.

(c) "Knowledge"

It is important to grow in knowledge, generally speaking, but especially "in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (II Pet. 3:18).

(d) "Temperance"

This fourth and important Christian grace means self-control. It does not always mean just abstention from certain things, but it also means the wise management of the Christian self so that excesses can and will be avoided even in the legitimate things in life. This bringing of the self (body, mind, and soul) to a well-balanced whole is the result of a process of a well-directed Christian discipline, which will give the Christian self-unity and concentration. Temperance is an important element in physical, mental, and spiritual health. It saves the self from hurtful and destructive indulgences and dissipations. It is one of the most difficult graces to develop. Moderation in all legitimate things is the voice of wisdom and religion. Temperance, too, grows by spiritual nourishment and exercise.

(e) "Patience"

This fifth character quality enables a Christian to stand firm in his purpose and his loyalty to faith and piety even in the most severe trials and sufferings. By it the Christian steadfastly endures and bears up under all trials and difficulties, enduring in all and persevering through all. It is not a mere callous, stoical indifference; but that true fear of God which makes men ready and willing to endure the greatest hardships and wrongs for the Master's sake. Patience, too, grows by spiritual nourishment and exercise.

(f) "Godliness"

According to the Apostle Peter, godliness meant Godlikeness. It is likeness to "God manifest in the flesh." It represents the Christian endeavor to fashion one's life and personality after the Christ pattern. It is a deep religious and reverential fear of God, not only worshipping Him with all becoming outward acts, but adoring, loving, and magnifying God in the heart. Godliness, too, grows by spiritual nourishment and exercise.

(g) "Brotherly kindness"

Brotherly kindness means brotherly love; the love which Christians cherish for each other as brothers or sisters; love that is kind to all Christians and not just a segment of Christians. It is the power and the skill that may enable us to fix and arrange all our human relationships aright, and keep them right, especially with our brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus. Brotherly love grows by spiritual nourishment and exercise. Lack of, or a poor expression of, brotherly kindness has caused much friction and sorrow in the Christian brotherhood.

(h) "Charity" or Love

Charity or love means divine love; love not only to God and all Christians but love to the whole human race, even to our enemies. All are born with a capacity to acquire human love, but divine love is the gift of God (Rom. 5:15). "God is love" (I John 4:8, 16). God the Father loved the world and gave His Son to save the world (John 3:16-17).

It is possible to grow in love to man and God, as the following quotes will show: "And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love" (I Thess. 3:12); "We beseech you, brethren, that ye increase more and more [in love]" (I Thess. 4:10); "For if these things [love included] be in you, and abound" (II Pet. 1:8). Love, too, grows by spiritual nourishment and exercise.

(i) Summary

The Apostle Peter had personally experienced the two works of grace that he emphasized in his letters. He also felt that he had witnessed a remarkable growth in his own Christian life and that in this he was an ensample to the believers. Therefore growth in Christian life is the prominent point of the teaching of his second letter. He seems to sum up what he would most earnestly impress on the Asia Minor Christians in the closing words of his second letter: "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." The apostle pinpoints with clarity and emphasis the importance of the eight ingredients of Christian character. He said to the Asia Minor

believers, "If these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful" (II Pet. 1:8). The seeds of these eight Christian character qualities are in the soil of religious experience, but they must grow into healthy fruitfulness if Christian experience and Christian life are to be maintained (II Pet. 1:9). Their healthy development is the only assurance against spiritual retrogression (II Pet. 1:10).

The apostle gives no priority to any of these eight graces but treats them all as equal components in the well-balanced spiritual strength of a Christian. Christian character as composed of these eight graces is a complete whole, and must have a balanced, harmonious growth, if it is to give health to Christian experience and proper direction to Christian life. Healthy and harmonious Christian character grows by spiritual nourishment and exercise, such as reading the Word of God and other good literature, prayer, family devotion, church attendance and worship with other Christian people, supporting the church with tithes and freewill offerings, giving time and talent to the work of the church, godly living, and world evangelism with Christ. Just as Christian experience results from divine-human cooperation, Christian character is built by divine-human cooperation.

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THE END