

Fulton County Gospel News

Good News About Christ And His Church For All Of The World

“. . . Christ is the head of the church: and He is the Savior of the body.” - Ephesians 5:23

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A DISCUSSION ON “GRACE”

What follows are articles on the topic of grace. The original article written by brother Robin Haley entitled, “Reigning Grace,” is reproduced from the November 1998 issue of **FCGN**. Brother Haley’s comments prompted a review of that article by brother Arnold Hardin. Brother Hardin wrote to me regarding brother Haley’s article, saying, “The amount of error it contains is astonishing! It is an affront to the cross.” Of course, I do not agree with brother Hardin’s assessment in the least, but I did offer to print his reply with the proviso that brother Haley could offer a rebuttal. I fully agree with brother Haley that brother Hardin misunderstands the place and purpose of the cross in God’s gracious plan for redeeming mankind. I had intended to present these articles in a more timely fashion, but they were misplaced and recently located.

In June, July, and August 1992 issues of **FCGN** I wrote three articles entitled, “The Book of James, ‘Straw’ or Law?” The purpose of those articles was to demonstrate the place of law and grace in the gospel of Christ, showing that Christians are under law to Christ (cf. 1 Corinthians 9:21 et al.) Those who wish to have copies of those articles can have them by sending a self-addressed legal size envelope with 57 cents postage attached. Perhaps there is no more important topic so frequently misunderstood than how God’s grace through Christ is to be obtained and maintained. Please consider the material which follows and write for the additional articles offered above to study this subject thoroughly. [Ted J. Clarke, editor]

REIGNING GRACE

by Robin W. Haley

*“That, as sin reigned in death, even so might grace reign through **righteousness** unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord”* (Romans 5:21). The book of Romans teaches us the necessity of Christianity. Without Christ and his law of faith, we could not be justified before God. This is the meaning when Paul wrote *“For therein is revealed a righteousness of God from faith unto faith: as it is written, But the righteous shall live by faith”* (Romans 1:17). Simply put, Paul is quoting from the Old Testament and declaring the age-old truth that the only ones that are going to live forever are those who are made righteous (justified) by means of the faith. There is no other way to be made just (right) in the sight of God.

Let us take note of two “reigns” in our title verse. The first is that of sin. Sin is supreme **in** death. That is, sin brought death (Romans 5:12) and continues to reign in the sphere of death. In this case, the key to this reign is the preposition “in” (ASV). The KJV has “unto” and the lexicons tell us this word has reference to “fixed position, instrumentality.” It describes the relationship between a noun and its actions. Here we find that sin reigns as the instrument or vehicle of death, which is the result of sin.

The other “reign” is that of grace. Our key word here is “through”. This proposition tells us of the relationship between nouns and pronouns. It says something does something else “by means of” another thing. In this case, grace is able to reign “by means of” righteousness. Wherever righteousness dwells or works [operates, tjc], grace will be found. Grace will not “override” righteousness, nor will it exist nor work where there is no righteousness. If we can only discover what righteousness is, we will discover the vehicle for grace.

Some have the mistaken notion that grace is synonymous with God; that God is grace, as God is love or light. Not so. God is the God of all grace, has grace, shows grace . . . **but He is not grace.** Grace is that which God will exercise through a certain means. That means is **righteousness.** Grace is able to be grace, be available to man and help him, because of righteousness.

So, what is righteousness? The simplest answer is found in what David wrote, *“Let my tongue sing of thy word; For **all thy commandments are righteousness**”* (Psalm 119:172). Please notice that the singer of Israel did not say that God’s commandments are *righteous*. They are, but he did not say that here. He said they are **righteousness.** The commands (the word) of God are the basis, the source, the meaning of righteousness. Where there is no word from God, there is no righteousness. Why? Because of what Jesus said, *“Sanctify them in the truth; thy word is truth”* (John 17:17). God’s work is truth and right and absolute. Again we read from the Psalms: *“The fear of Jehovah is clean, enduring for ever: The **ordinances** of Jehovah are true, [and] **righteous altogether**”* (Psalm 19:9).

Here is what we learn: God’s righteous work is the basis and source for righteousness through which grace may reign. Where there is no command of God, there is no righteousness; where there is no observance of God’s righteousness (obedience) there is no grace. Wait! Someone may well say, “Does God not show grace to mankind apart from the Bible?” Yes, as seen in the sun, rain, air, food, health, etc. But the context of our subject is not material things. Romans 5:21 is dealing with the spiritual blessings that are found only in Christ (Ephesians 1:3). The world cannot

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have these except through Christ. The world cannot have Christ except through obedience to God's word. In this way **only** will God show grace which brings salvation (Ephesians 2:8; Titus 2: 11,12).

Let us read again what Paul wrote: *"that, as sin reigned in death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord"* (Romans 5:21). Do you want God's grace? Then keep his word. His word promises eternal life through Christ. When you are obedient to Him, by obeying the word, *then* God's grace will save . . . **and not until.**

211 N. 5th St.
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"A REVIEW OF REIGNING GRACE"

by Arnold Hardin

I thank the editor for his courtesy. I do so with respect for the author and the deepest respect for truth. Paul received no pleasure withstanding Peter over

these same issues. Truth demanded action, for when he saw "they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel", he had no other choice (Gal. 2:14). The identical principles regarding salvation; law/works, grace/faith are set forth in "Reigning Grace." The text: "That as sin reigned in death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 5:21).

Argument #1 - He used Rom. 1:17 and remarked, "That the only ones that are going to be saved are those who are made righteous (justified) by means of the faith. There is no other way to be made righteous (just) in the sight of God." What is "the faith" by which sinners are justified? His explanation is the same that entrapped Peter (Gal. 2:15-21). In his re-writing of Rom. 1:17 the author equates faith to a system of law by which we make ourselves righteous before God. What saith Paul? (Gal. 3:1-15). "Law is not of faith" because it has no Savior within it. Any law system can only condemn; it cannot give life (Gal. 3:21). Paul says those that seek justification through law are under a curse. "The faith" is Christ. Grace gave the law to awaken to the condemnation of sin. Moses was a messenger; Christ was the message (John 1:17; Gal. 3:23-29). The only saving righteousness is by faith in Christ (Gal. 3:22; Phil. 3:9). Grace, the cross of Christ, terminated/eliminated the law principle (Col. 2: 14-17). Christianity is not a spruced up law of Moses. You cannot come to calvary by way of Sinai.

Argument #2 - The author wrote, "Grace is able to reign by means of righteousness." He insisted that grace cannot work or exist where there is no righteousness. So he asks, "What is righteousness?" He cites Psa. 119:172 and concludes that "God's righteous word is the basis and source for righteousness through which grace may reign". This is a denial of Paul as in the text (Rom. 5:21).

This is law/works righteousness accomplished by ungodly sinners. According to such the Jews were made righteous/just/saved by keeping the law of Moses. They did not need a Savior. A preacher among us has said, "Men were constituted righteous through the law but not now". Now it is argued that we are under a new law given through Christ and therefore we make ourselves righteous by our obedience as did the Jews.

Instead of "what is righteousness" we should ask, "whose righteousness." Paul answers (Rom. 5:21; 2 Cor. 5:20-21; 2 Tim. 1:9, Eph. 2:8-11; 1 Cor. 1:30). Vicarious righteousness is denied, the only saving kind. Salvation is not earned by law keeping (Jas. 2:10). Salvation is a gift - a free gift. It is received by faith/trust in our Savior not by our "filthy rags" of our supposedly earned salvation (Rom 6:23). Christ is our righteousness and to be such he had to do two things: Live a perfect life under law and bear the penalty (death) of broken law (2 Cor. 5:21). He thus became a curse for us. This eliminates self reliance and the pride of "paying our own way". We sing, "Jesus paid it all," and then deny it. What can an ungodly sinner add to God's grace in Christ? The gospel is not about some business deal; the sinner paying a part of his salvation and then when his own righteousness is in place he may ask God to sprinkle in a little grace by way of helping out. How do the percentages work: 75% man's righteousness; 25% grace, or, a fifty fifty proposition?

I beg of you to turn from such legalistic concepts and absorb the teaching of Christ as found in Luke eighteen. As each of us is the temple of the Holy Spirit, how do you honestly view yourself in worship to God? The verdict of man's only Redeemer was against the legalistic Phariseism of that day and my brethren. The verdict has not changed regarding the same attitudes and teaching in opposition to the cross.

2722 McCutcheon
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A REBUTTAL OF ARNOLD HARDIN'S "REVIEW OF 'REIGNING GRACE'"

by Robin W. Haley

Brother Arnold Hardin of Dallas, Texas has written a rather confusing and convoluted six paragraph "response" to what I had written some months ago regarding the fact that without faithful obedience to the will of God, as revealed in the New Testament, one could not enjoy the spiritual blessings of God's grace. He apparently denies this Biblical truth, and maintains the antinomian neo-Calvinistic line that there is nothing one must do to be saved, implying that the personal righteousness of Christ is somehow given to us. Brother Hardin is dead wrong and makes the typical error of most antinomians [those who say Christians are not under any law, Ed.] in that he wants to equate any mention of "law" with the things Paul said about the Old Testament Law of Moses. His mixing of apples and oranges is quite apparent as I shall show.

In paragraph one, he writes that what I wrote in my previous article is the same "issue" and "identical principles" that set Peter against the truth of the Gospel (Gal. chapter two). That Peter was guilty of separating himself from certain Gentile brethren when other Jewish brethren were present, in no way resembles what I wrote. In fact, I never made mention of the Old Testament except to say that Paul quoted from it. Never did I write that we have anything to do with the Old Testament code of behavior.

In paragraph two, he alleges that I suggest that we seek justification by the Old Testament law, again mentioning Peter's folly. I never mentioned Peter nor his error in my writing. He mistakes an *interpretation of the meaning of* Romans 1:17 with "re-writing" it. He is wrong to accuse me of this crime. I would like to have him tell me just what this passage does mean. Anything he says that would not simply be a quote of the verse would be, in his view

apparently, a "re-writing" of it. How can one interpret any passage? How does he explain anything out of the Bible? In his "correction" of my perceived legalism, every passage he used to correct me was simply (according to his thinking) a "re-writing" of verses. Shame on him.

Never did I say nor imply that we make ourselves righteous before God. The Bible does teach that we are righteous before him. But how do we arrive at such a stand? Re-read my first article. This is what Paul taught. Brother Hardin cites Galatians several times. Again his error is seen in the fact that Paul was discussing the Old Testament. I was not. I was discussing the meaning and the results of faithful obedience to the Gospel of Christ. In the passages cited by Hardin, Paul was not.

In paragraph three, he simply alleges that my explanation of the Greek prepositions used by Paul was incorrect. He does not attempt to correct my grammar, but simply asserts that what I taught is a "denial of Paul." I never denied Paul or anything he taught. Empty words by brother Hardin.

Paragraph four is no different than paragraph number two. He equates an error of some Jews with obedience to the Gospel. Apples and oranges. I wonder, with his view of the Jews, will any of them be saved that lived before the cross? With his use of absolutes, the only Jews that will be in Heaven are those who did nothing to be saved but accept Jesus as their personal righteousness. Now, where did he find such nonsense in the Bible? He got that from John Calvin. He needs to read Romans 3:27 again and see if there is any law that relates to the faith of Christ.

In paragraph five, he again lists a number of passages that have absolutely nothing to do with either what I wrote, nor with his complaint of what I wrote. Where did I write that we "earned salvation by law-keeping?" He accuses me of writing it. Where does he find the teaching of "vicarious righteousness being the only saving

kind"? Now he sounds like the Catholics. This is a part of their perverse view of Augustine's doctrine (which John Calvin held to and expanded). Where does the Bible teach that "Christ is *our* righteousness"? He forgot to put the book, chapter, and verse in his text for our perusal. More accusations of "self reliance and pride of paying our own way; paying a part of our salvation and putting our own righteousness in place." Where did I write such blather? He asked, "what can an ungodly sinner add to God's grace in Christ?" My answer; nothing. But my previous article, and the Bible, asks and answers the real question: "How does a sinner accept and receive God's grace in Christ?" Through faithful obedience to the Gospel of Christ.

Finally, he begs me to turn from legalistic concepts. He has yet to show them from what I wrote. I would in turn beg him to turn from his antinomian error and follow in the steps of the faith of our father Abraham (Romans 4:12). He needs to go and learn what this means. A careful study of Hebrews 11 and James two will show him much. I wrote brother Hardin a personal letter and offered some proposals for debate on this topic of "imputed righteousness" and "obedience being necessary." I wanted the reading audience to know that also. I hope he accepts. I am still waiting for him.

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IS IT POSSIBLE TO PREACH ANYTHING AND NOT BOTHER SOMEBODY?

by Max Patterson

No preacher who has preached for any length of time has escaped hearing something similar to this: "Why don't you just preach the truth and leave people alone?" Is that possible? Is it possible to preach so as not to bother anybody?

Could I preach that we should abstain from worldliness and leave others alone? No, because there are so many who love to

indulge themselves in worldliness, and never mind that the Bible says "Abstain from every form of evil." (1 Thess. 5:22 cf. 1 Jn. 2:15-17).

Could I leave others alone and preach not to forsake the assembly? No, because there are many, many people who forsake the assembly despite the fact that we are told "not to forsake" (Heb. 10:25).

Could I leave others alone and preach that we should hear and believe in Jesus Christ only? No, for there are those who, like Peter, want to erect three tabernacles. Too, the Buddhists would not be happy at all. Neither would the Hindus. God said, however, "hear ye him [Christ]" (Mt. 17:5).

Could I leave others alone and preach one baptism? No, because there are several baptisms advocated by religious folks. Never mind that the Scriptures teach one, (Eph. 4:5) and that it is for forgiveness (Acts 2:38; 22:16).

Could I leave others alone and preach about the church? No, because many do not feel the church is important. And this, despite the Lord died on the cross for it (Acts 20:28).

Of course, I might preach myself, my experiences, feelings, opinions, thinksos. After all, the tendency is to please men, but I can't do that. If I please men I can't please God (Gal. 1:10). I would simply have to quit preaching. But I cannot do that either. Like Paul, "woe is to me if I preach not the gospel." So, I'll tell you what I am

**We Will Face God
In The Day Of Judgment.
(whether we want to or not)**

going to do. I am going to do what I decided to do many years ago. I am going to preach the gospel, the truth, and if people get mad at that truth, that is something they will have to take up with God. If not in this lifetime, then at the judgment. We will (whether we want to or not) face God in the day of judgment.

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**TEN THOUGHTS
TO START THE DAY**

(From Psalms 116 and 118)
by Max Patterson

- This is the day the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.
- I will praise thee: for thou hast heard me, and art become my salvation.
- The Lord is on my side; I will not fear; what can man do unto me?
- The Lord is my strength and song, and is become my salvation.
- I love the Lord, because he hath heard my voice and my supplications.
- Because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live.
- I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living.
- I will pray my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all his people.
- Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.
- Thou art my God, and I will praise thee: thou art my God, I will exalt thee.

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**GOD'S AUTHORIZED WORSHIP
- COLOSSIANS 3:17**

1. **LORD'S SUPPER** - The New Testament and early church history record that Christians met on the first day of every week (Sunday) to worship God and remember Christ (Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 11:23-34: 16:1-2).
2. **PRAYERS** - (Acts 2:42; Philippians 4:6-7; I Thessalonians 5:17-18).
3. **SINGING** - God's word authorizes only vocal music and specifically singing (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; Hebrews 2:12). The New Testament shows no use of mechanical instruments of music in worship to God by the church Christ established. Church history notes no such use for nearly 700 years after the New Testament was completed. It is an innovation of men, not of God.
4. **GIVING** - Free-willed, cheerful, generous, and every week (Acts 20:35; I Corinthians 16:1-2; 2 Corinthians 8 & 9).
5. **PREACHING OF THE WORD** - The gospel of Christ, not men's doctrines nor entertainment, saves and strengthens us (Acts 2:42; 20:7; Romans 10:17; I Corinthians 1:18-23).

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