



# BOLD TO SPEAK THE MYSTERY

Volume 3

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## God-Centered Grace Prayer or Man-Centered Religious Prayer? (Rom. 8:16-28)

### Introduction

It is a shame that many believers who come to understand Paul's Grace Teachings in the light of what God is accomplishing today through his distinct apostleship, begin to feel like they don't have anything to pray about. But this not a problem with *reality* but with *perception*. By the time we get through Romans 1-8 (and let's throw in Ephesians 1-3 to top it off!), to the spiritual mind, we have an INFINITE number of things to commune about with God our Father.

We have more than what man-centered religious and theological systems offer. We even have more than what the Nation of Israel had in her Prophetic Program for establishing God's Glory on the Earth. To us today in the Body of Christ, God has

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revealed all the infinite truths of His Mystery Program for establishing God's Glory in the Heavens, which He devised in eternity past *but now* has revealed to and through the Apostle Paul,

who recorded them for us in his Letters, his Scriptures.

The *reality* of the situation is that we have more to pray and commune with God about than ever before. Why then, do we *perceive*; why then, do we "feel" like we don't? The reason for this is that we haven't fully thrown away non-Pauline religious prayer and fully embraced Pauline Grace Prayer. We are still trying to make God-centered Grace Prayer fit into the form of man-centered religious prayer.

But doing this is a great mistake. It is like trying to force a square peg into a round hole. It just won't work. We need to once-and-for-all throw away the square peg of religious prayer we have been indoctrinated with by our own vain religious system and replace it with the round peg of Pauline Grace Prayer as taught by the Word and the Spirit. **But God be thanked that *though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine (Pauline Grace teaching) to which you were delivered (Rom. 6:17).***

### The Content of Grace Prayer

We often think that the most basic difference between man-made religious prayer

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and Spirit-led Grace Prayer is in its *content*. We don't pray about the same things we used to pray about. In rightly dividing the Word, we recognize that promises God made to the Nation of Israel do not apply to believers today in the Body of Christ. We recognize that God's purpose for Israel was earthly, therefore, they especially required physical and material blessings. Whereas for us today in the Body of Christ, God's purpose is heavenly, therefore, we especially require spiritual blessings. And that is exactly what He has freely given us in Christ the moment we were saved. He has given us ALL SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS IN HEAVENLY PLACES IN CHRIST (Eph. 1:3)!

Appreciating and communing *thankfully* with God about these spiritual blessings then becomes the basic *content* of Grace Prayer. What we pray *about*. But what most miss is that this is not the only difference between Grace Prayer and religious prayer. They differ not only in *content* but in *mode* and *purpose* as well.

### The Mode of Grace Prayer

The *mode* of religious prayer is sporadic, whereby people ignore God most of the time, and then when there is a problem, they drop to their knees, force themselves into God's throne room, and plead with or even demand that He remove their difficulty and solve their problem.

A variant of this is when we are told to use religious prayer to try to increase our "spirituality." A "Christian living" book I perused recently, claimed that to be minimally spiritual you had to set aside 15 minutes a day for prayer. But if you wanted to increase your spirituality you needed to increase the time to 30 or 60 minutes or longer. But this

is just religious nonsense. If you have thrown away Paul's Grace truths, you don't have anything to pray to God about anyway, so it doesn't matter whether you do it for 15, 30 or 60 minutes a day or even 24/7, it is not going to change the situation.

The *mode* of Pauline Grace Prayer, however, is not sporadic or at set times (although there is certainly nothing wrong with setting aside specific time to focus on grace prayer with God!). Rather, and most importantly, Grace Prayer is the constant, unceasing, ongoing, never ending communion with our Father. It interweaves the warp and woof of our existence to produce the fabric of our moment-by-moment Christian lives that pleases the Father. We are to Pray Without Ceasing (1 Thess. 5:17). That is the mode of Grace Prayer: *How* we are to pray.

But there is more. Not only does Grace Prayer differ from religious prayer in *content* and *mode*, it also differs in *purpose* as well.

### The Purpose of Grace Prayer

The *purpose* of religious prayer, according to man-made religious and man-centered theological systems, is to get God involved in our things. But this turns everything upside down and inside out. It makes God the servant and us the master. It becomes a form of bribery or perhaps blackmail against God: God, I have a problem. I can't serve you until the problem is removed, so I am going to sit and wait for you to remove the problem, and then I will serve you.

But this goes against all Pauline Grace Truth. Today, we understand that God's *purpose* is not to fix and remove all our problems. Rather, God is holding back His wrath and judgment to destroy His enemies (which is what would be required if He were to fix the

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world's problems), while He instead dispenses His Grace and Peace to His enemies, offering them salvation through the distinct apostleship of Paul, before He returns to destroy them in His wrath and judgment. Today, God has perfectly equipped believers to serve Him in the midst of suffering, ministering reconciliation to a lost world under the power and control of Satan, Sin and Death. And it is not in the *removal* of these problems that God's *purpose* is most powerfully displayed but in the midst of them. God's power is most effectively displayed when we serve Him despite problems and in weakness in the sufficiency of Christ (2 Cor. 12:9).

When we commune with God in accord with the *content, mode and purpose* of Grace Prayer, we will not spend our prayer life trying to get God to do things that He is not doing. He is not removing our problems so that we can serve Him. He is empowering us to serve Him in the midst of problems. Instead, we will spend our prayer lives believing, embracing, thanking God for involving us in His things—the GREATEST THINGS OF ALL!—requesting that He might use us in the midst of trials to be dispensers of His Grace and Peace to a sin-cursed world. When we do that, life's problems become opportunities not for panic and despair but for patience and hope (Rom. 5:1-8). In other words, Grace Truth Prayers recognize that God is the Master, we are the servants, and that prayer isn't our way to get God involved in our things, but His way to get us involved in His things.

### Real Life Example of Grace Prayer

I had the opportunity many years ago to minister to a young man, married with several little children all under the age of 10. He

suddenly came down with a rare cancer that was terminal. He began his journey in religious prayer, and while he was receiving treatments, he prayed that God would heal him, and if He did, he promised to serve him.

This appeared to be working at first. After treatments, the cancer appeared to be in remission, and he thanked God for curing his cancer. But before long, the cancer returned worse than it was before. At first the young man grew bitter with himself. God must have been punishing him and/or his family for something he did in the past. Or perhaps he didn't have enough faith. This bitterness soon progressed into bitterness against God. Why was God being so unresponsive. Why was He being so mean. Eventually, he even had hidden thoughts that questioned God and His faithfulness.

Ultimately the doctors told him that they had nothing more to offer him. He went home and entered hospice. He shut the door to his bedroom, closed the curtains, turned off all the lights, upped the pain medication, and in his bitterness, refused to let anyone in to see him, not even his wife and children. He just laid in bed all alone, despairing in the darkness, angry with God.

Then he began to learn some grace truths. He learned that God's plan for today is not the removal of sufferings and problems, nor are they indicators that God has removed His blessings or love (Rom. 5:1-5). Rather, he learned that God's plan had fully equipped him to serve Him in the midst of sufferings while undergoing problems and difficulties. In the light of these new truths, He prayed, communed, talked with God continually about these things.

He kept growing in the knowledge of all the grace blessings God had freely given him that could not be diminished or lost because they were not based on him and what

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he did but on Christ and what He did on the Cross for him. The Holy Spirit took these things, revealed them to him, planted them in his heart. This changed his thinking, which changed his feelings, which changed his actions. He pushed the pain medication far away, opened the curtains and door, turned on the lights and let his whole family in. His family swarmed him on his bed, and He pushed through the pain so that he could sit up and minister God's grace truths to them as well, truths that would remain with them all, even the youngest for the rest of their lives.

This is what Paul calls redeeming the time (Eph. 5:15-16), taking a hopeless and despairing situation in this sin-cursed world and reclaiming it for God, who has transformed it with Christ and His Cross into something full of hope and joy. Such is the power of Grace Truths and Prayer. This is true Spirit-led prayer.

### Sonship Grace Prayer: Prayer In The Gaps Rom. 8:14-27

We have been learning in our study of Rom. 8:14-27 that sonship prayer in the present evil world system occurs with our glorified status hidden under the cover of sufferings, tribulations and weaknesses. As adult sons and daughters in God's family, we know God's ultimate purpose for creation and believers, but we also know how far we fall short of fully enjoying that purpose in our present day experience. Therefore, sonship prayer today is prayer in the gaps.

Paul personifies creation, describing it in human terms as a person who recognizes God's ultimate plan for it yet groans in hope because it sees the gap between the full reali-

zation of that divine goal and where it is today in bondage to corruption. It longs for that gap to be closed at the manifestation of God's sons and daughters when it will be liberated from bondage to corruption (Rom. 8:19-22).

But not only does creation groan, we believers today groan as well. As adult sons and daughters, who have been brought into the Father's business by the Spirit (8:14-17), we know God's ultimate purpose for us, yet we also see the gap that exists between where we are in our experience and where God designed us to be positionally before Him. So, we groan, longing for this gap to be closed by the future bodily resurrection when we will be freed from our unredeemed bodies where sin resides and manifested fully in our glorified bodies filling our sonship position with Christ in glory (Rom. 8:23-25).

But that's not all. Today, not only are creation and believers groaning, but the Holy Spirit groans as well because He knows all the things that the Father has provided to believers through Christ. He knows every detail of the Father's complete and perfect plan, purpose and provision for believers as they serve Him today in the context of suffering. Yet He also knows that because of infirmities and weaknesses, there is a gap between the perfect and complete provision God has made available to us and our fully knowing, recognizing, appreciating and availing ourselves of those things by faith in our actual experience. So, the Spirit longs to narrow and close this gap by bearing witness of the Father's things with the believer (Rom. 8:14-16) and interceding on behalf of the believer before the Father (Rom. 8:26-28) that we might make full use of them.

It is in these gaps between God's ultimate plan for His creation and where it stands today in the Dispensation of Grace that Grace Prayer occurs. The adult children of God



know God's ultimate plan and purpose for them, yet they also recognize how far short they fall from it. So, they pray, commune and talk with God about this, groaning, longing that He might use them to narrow this gap among those around them, especially within the assembly of believers, selflessly sharing God's things with others out of Agape Love for the sole purpose of building them up in God's truth for today.

Maybe they see someone who is groaning because of a gap between God's perfect forgiveness in Christ and the forgiveness they experience. Dear Father, could You use me to share your forgiveness with that person to narrow that gap and build them up in Christ?

Maybe they see someone being blown about by every wind of doctrine rather than being fully established on the solid foundation of God's Mystery Truth. Dear Father, perhaps You could use me to share Mystery Truth with that person to narrow the gap between their understanding and where You would like them to be.

Maybe they know someone who feels unloved, displaying a gap between how they feel and the perfect Love of God at the Cross of Christ. Dear Father, could You use me in some way to share Your Love with that person, narrowing that gap?

Maybe someone they know is focusing on the things of this world because of the difficulties of life, which is pulling them away from God and His purpose, resulting in a gap between God's desire that he focus on heavenly things and what he is experiencing at the time in focusing on earthly things. Dear Father, could You use me in some way to draw his eyes back to Christ and the Cross and Your heavenly purpose for him? We could go on and on, but I think you get the point.

We see these things exemplified in Paul's ministry in Rom. 1:1-17. The Holy Spirit bears witness with Paul's Spirit about the truths regarding what God is doing through his distinct apostleship on behalf of the world, especially the Gentiles (Rom. 1:5-9). Through the Spirit, Paul looks at how God is powerfully working in the Romans through the ministry of his co-workers. He is thankful for this but he also recognizes that the Romans are not yet all that God intends for them to be. He sees that there is a gap between where they are at that time and where God intends for them to be ultimately. So, he groans, longing to narrow and close that gap. This generates within him a request that he talks to the Father about, communing with God about the possibility of being used by God to narrow and close that gap among the Roman assemblies. Based on Agape Love (not thinking of his own things but the things of the Romans unto their establishment), Paul offers to go to Rome and impart to them a spiritual gift that is able to *fully* establish them (Rom. 1:11), which is: **Paul's Gospel, and the Preaching of Jesus Christ according to the Revelation of the Mystery, which had been kept secret since the world began** (Rom. 16:25).

That's the way it works. Prayer in the gaps. Prayer is God's way of using us to narrow the gaps between our perfect position in Christ and our imperfect experience of that position. We are to participate in the closing of these gaps by being His dispensers of Grace and Peace to fellow believers and a lost world, looking forward in hope to the fulfillment of all things in Christ when all the gaps will be closed. At that time, the whole creation will perfectly and permanently enjoy the glory of God (Eph. 1:10)! But until then, thankfully, we have PRAYER IN THE GAPS!

If you would like to learn more about this, click below:

[\*\*THE ROMANS STUDY\*\*](#)

## WHY DIDN'T JESUS'S DISCIPLES UNDERSTAND?

One of the most surprising things readers of the Gospel of Matthew have trouble understanding is why Jesus's disciples, including the 12, seem to be so dense when it comes to understanding the teachings of Jesus. For the most part, they just don't get it. Many times Jesus in frustration asks: Don't you understand yet? This is especially true of His teaching about His suffering, death and resurrection (Mat. 16:21). Peter rejected it out right, saying, **This will not be so!** Not on my watch! To which Jesus answers: **Get thee behind me Satan** (Mat. 16:22-23)! And if Peter, the spokesman for the 12, didn't get it, you can be sure that the other 11 didn't get it either.

One common way of trying to explain this surprising lack of understanding is to conclude that God Himself must be keeping these truths hidden from them, and some use 1 Cor. 2:7-8 to support this position:

**But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden *wisdom*, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known *it*, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.**

On the surface, this is an appealing explanation. God kept the Cross secret from everyone because if anyone knew about it the rulers—both earthly and Satanic—would not have crucified the Lord.

But there are shortcomings with this explanation that rule it out of consideration. The first shortcoming is the actual Gospel accounts themselves. If God wanted Jesus to hide these truths about His suffering and death from them, He had an odd way of going about it. In the final chapters of Matthew alone, Jesus instructed them directly no fewer than three times (and many other times indirectly) about His upcoming suffering and

death (Mat. 16:21-23; 17:22-23; 20:17-19). But they refused to receive this teaching in faith and rejected it. When Jesus taught these truths, Peter went so far as to rebuke Him (Mat. 16:22), the disciples rejected it in unbelief so that they could not carry out their ministry (17:19-20), and Peter, James and John (not to mention the latter's mother) were more interested in their ascent to greatness in the Kingdom than in Jesus's upcoming descent into death (Mat. 19:27, 20:20-21). One could argue that the problem wasn't really that they didn't understand it because God hid it from them. The problem was that they more or less understood it but rejected it in unbelief.

But there is a second, more important, reason why this explanation fails. Using 1 Cor. 2:7-8 to explain the disciples lack of understanding doesn't consider the different ways Jesus's death is characterized in the Bible. In the Old Testament, including the books of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, the death of Messiah is presented as BAD NEWS: Horrifyingly Jesus, Israel's Messiah, had to die for His own people, suffer at their hands, BE betrayed by His "friend" and be handed over to the Gentiles (Ps. 22; Is. 53; Mat. 16:21; 17:22; 20:19; Jn. 15:13).

But the important thing to remember is that in Paul's Epistles, including in our passage in 1 Cor. 2, Jesus's death is presented as Gospel, as GOOD NEWS! All you have to do is read 1 Cor. 1 where Paul exultantly proclaims that the preaching of the Cross is **the power of God and provides salvation to all who believe** and is the **wisdom of God** (1 Cor. 1:17-31). The GOOD NEWS of the Cross and its effect on not just the earth but the heavenlies as well turned the whole universe upside down, defeating Satan at all points. What all of man's wisdom—all the world's philosophers

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and scientists and political theorists and artists, all together—couldn't do is save even one sinner! But through the preaching of the GOOD NEWS of the Cross all who believe are instantly and eternally saved! And the Mystery is that those saved today are placed in the Body of Christ, which God is going to use to re-establish His Glory in the Heavens. SURPRISE SATAN! He didn't see that one coming. God had caught Satan in his own craftiness. That's Paul's GOOD NEWS of the death of Christ.

### THE NON-PAULINE SCRIPTURES AND THE DEATH OF CHRIST: THE EARTH

The death of Christ as BAD NEWS was no secret in prophetic history as recorded in the Old Testament, Gospel Accounts, ministry of the 12 and Hebrews through Revelation. Psalm 22 and Is. 53 are classic examples (among many others) that clearly reveal it. Satan had read these passages and very well knew about the BAD NEWS of Christ's death, but he thought it was worth the risk to try to use it for his own advantage and ultimate victory for maintaining His possession of the Earth. But even if he failed at doing this, and Christ was victorious on the Cross (as He was!) and God raised Him from the dead (as He did!), Satan thought it would just mean that he would lose his hold on Israel and the nations of the Earth. He would be free to go back to his heavenly abode with the rest of his fallen angels and continue to rule there.

When Peter preached the BAD NEWS of Jesus's death to the leaders of Israel in Acts 2-3, he explained that the One they put to death, God raised from the dead! He was

victorious over Satan and the world. So, the men of Israel Peter was preaching this to had better repent and receive Jesus as their Messiah because He was about ready to return in His wrath and judgment to destroy His enemies, remove Satan's kingdom off the Earth and replace it with God's Kingdom on the Earth. This was no secret or mystery. This is a part of prophetic revelation going back to at least Gen. 3:15 and was still being talked about by Peter in Acts 3:18-26.

**But *those things*, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled. Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when *the* times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all *things*, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began ... And it shall come to pass, *that* every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people. Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days. Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the EARTH be blessed.**

But this is where Paul's Mystery revelation (Rom. 16:25), truth that had been KEPT SECRET SINCE THE WORLD BEGAN, kicks in. It explains that through the death of Christ God would not only take the earthly realm away from Satan but the Heav-

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enly realm away from him as well! God didn't need to keep secret the BAD NEWS of Christ's death. He needed to keep secret the GOOD NEWS of His death.

### THE PAULINE SCRIPTURES AND THE DEATH OF CHRIST: THE HEAVENLIES

God sent the Apostle Paul with surprising and disturbing news (to Satan and the world) that through Christ's death, God would not only use a redeemed humanity, the Nation of Israel, to re-possess the earth unto His Glory, He would also use another redeemed humanity, the Body of Christ, to re-possess the HEAVENLY realm unto His Glory. This is what He had kept secret, and this is what He had to keep secret, since the world began (Rom. 16:25)!

It was no secret that God would re-establish His Glory on the earth through a redeemed humanity, the Nation of Israel. After all, humans belong on the earth. Anyone, including Satan, could guess that! But what no one could guess, not man or angel, is that in eternity past God also devised a plan to use a redeemed humanity, the Body of Christ, to re-establish His Glory in the Heavenlies! Wait! Humans don't belong in the Heavenlies! Angels belong there but not men! No one would ever guess that, not in a million-million years, and no one did! Not even Satan himself in all his cleverness and cunning and supposed wisdom. No, he was taken in his own craftiness and as surprised as everyone else.

And it is this secret that God had kept until He revealed it to and through Paul that our verses in 1 Cor. 2 refer to. God kept that secret because had the Satanic and

worldly powers known it, THEY WOULD NOT HAVE CRUCIFIED THE LORD! Satan might have figured out that through the death of Christ he would lose his control of Israel, the nations and the earth, but what he had never thought of is that through that same death (which he and his earthly cohorts just carried out on the Cross!) he would also lose his control of the Heavenlies!! He was totally defeated, de-throned, and will soon be vanquished to the Lake of Fire forevermore, or as Paul writes: **And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly** (Rom. 16:20).

No wonder Satan attacks Pauline truth so voraciously and its people, the Body of Christ. And no wonder he attacks God's people, the Believing Remnant, the true Nation of Israel, so viciously in the Tribulation Period. He is out of options. He is a caged lion. He is going to make one last ditch effort to reclaim some part of his dominion. But it will all fail because of the GOOD NEWS of the death and resurrection of Christ, kept secret since the world began (Rom. 16:25; Eph. 1 and 3).

### THE DISCIPLES LACK OF UNDERSTANDING: THE REAL REASON

So, we return to our original question: Why did the disciples so pervasively lack understanding of Jesus's teaching, especially with regard to His suffering and death? We have seen that it is not because God hid it from them. In fact, Jesus taught it to them over and over again. So then, why? We don't have to come up with complicated answers because Jesus explicitly states why they did not understand: **They were savoring not the**



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**things that be of God, but those that be of men** (Mat. 16:21b). They were thinking like the Vain Religious and Vain Political Systems of Israel, not Jesus. They were valuing the things of men and the world, not the things of God. In short, they were not believing all that Jesus said. This is an inter-dispensational truth. This is the reason why we today usually don't receive the teachings of the Risen Jesus through Paul's distinct apostleship. Not because we don't understand them but because we understand them yet reject them. We value the things of men rather than the things of God.

After Christ's death and resurrection, and the blood of the New Covenant had been shed, Jesus gave his disciples a foretaste of the New Covenant blessings. One of those blessings was that no one would need to teach a fellow Israelite anymore God's truth because all of them would have perfect knowledge and understanding of the Lord (Jer. 31:34; Acts 2:42). What they had rejected through the flesh before, they will receive through the Spirit in the future. Another of these blessings placed the Law in their hearts and gave the Holy Spirit to cause them to do it (Jer. 31:33; Ezek. 36:27). With all this in place, the Risen Lord Jesus breathed on the disciples and said unto them: **Receive ye the Holy Spirit** (Jn. 20:22) and **opened their understanding that they might understand the Scriptures** (Lk. 24:45).

### ADDENDUM: KEEP IT SECRET

There is one other aspect of the "secret" component of Jesus's teaching. Jesus did hide at least some of His truth during the latter part of His earthly ministry. But He did not hide this truth from His disciples, but from the wicked generation that comprised the unbelieving apostate nation that was determined to reject Him.

He does this by turning away from the unbelieving generation and turns to His Own generation in Mat. 12. He is not going to begin teaching His disciples things about what He is going to do with the nation between His 1st and 2nd Comings in the Parables, whereby He reveals these truths to the believers within but hides them from unbelievers without.

He deliberately did this to keep the unbelieving nation in ignorance so that He could mercifully pray on the Cross: **Father forgive them for they know not what they do** (Lk. 23:34). He kept them in ignorance so that He could through a technicality reduce their charge from pre-meditated murder to involuntary manslaughter. While murder had no remedy under the Law except the death penalty, manslaughter did. The person guilty of manslaughter could flee to one of Israel's cities of refuge, and that is exactly what God made Jerusalem at Pentecost in early Acts. Through the ministry of the 12 and the Holy Spirit, God offered the leaders of national Israel another opportunity to receive the Messiah and King they had rejected. If they believed the Gospel of the Kingdom preached by Peter (which would result in their being justified before God and His Tribunal—i.e., personal forgiveness of sins), joined with the believing remnant in national repentance and cleansing program, beginning with water baptism for the remission of sins (their corporate sins from being a part of the Nation of Israel) and receiving the baptism of the Spirit in that day, they would be delivered from the baptism of Fire in the future, the coming wrath—the Great and Terrible Day of the Lord.

**If you would like to learn more about this,  
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**[THE MATTHEW STUDY](#)**

# THE PAULINE GRACE LIFE: Rom. 5:1-5

## GRACE TEACHING

Rom. 5:1-5

HOLY SPIRIT

FAITH

LOVE

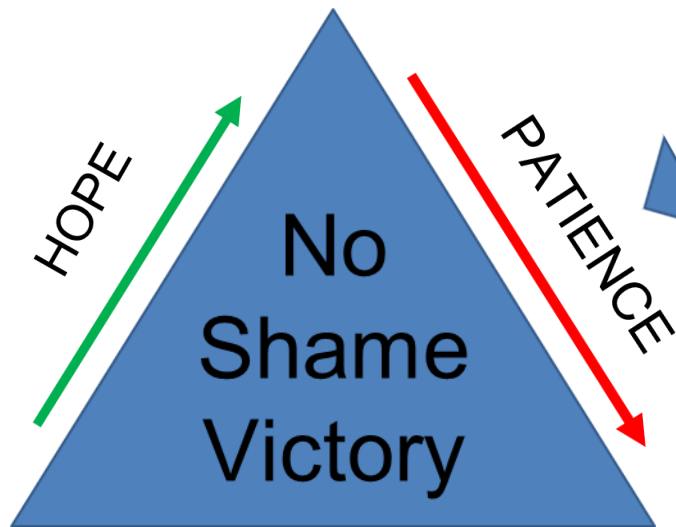
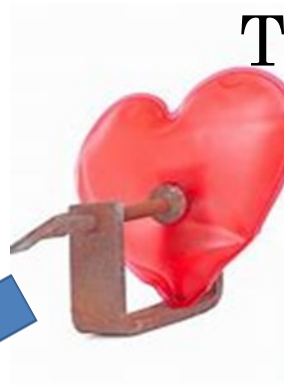
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THE HOLY SPIRIT GIVES A  
HEART OF AGAPE LOVE

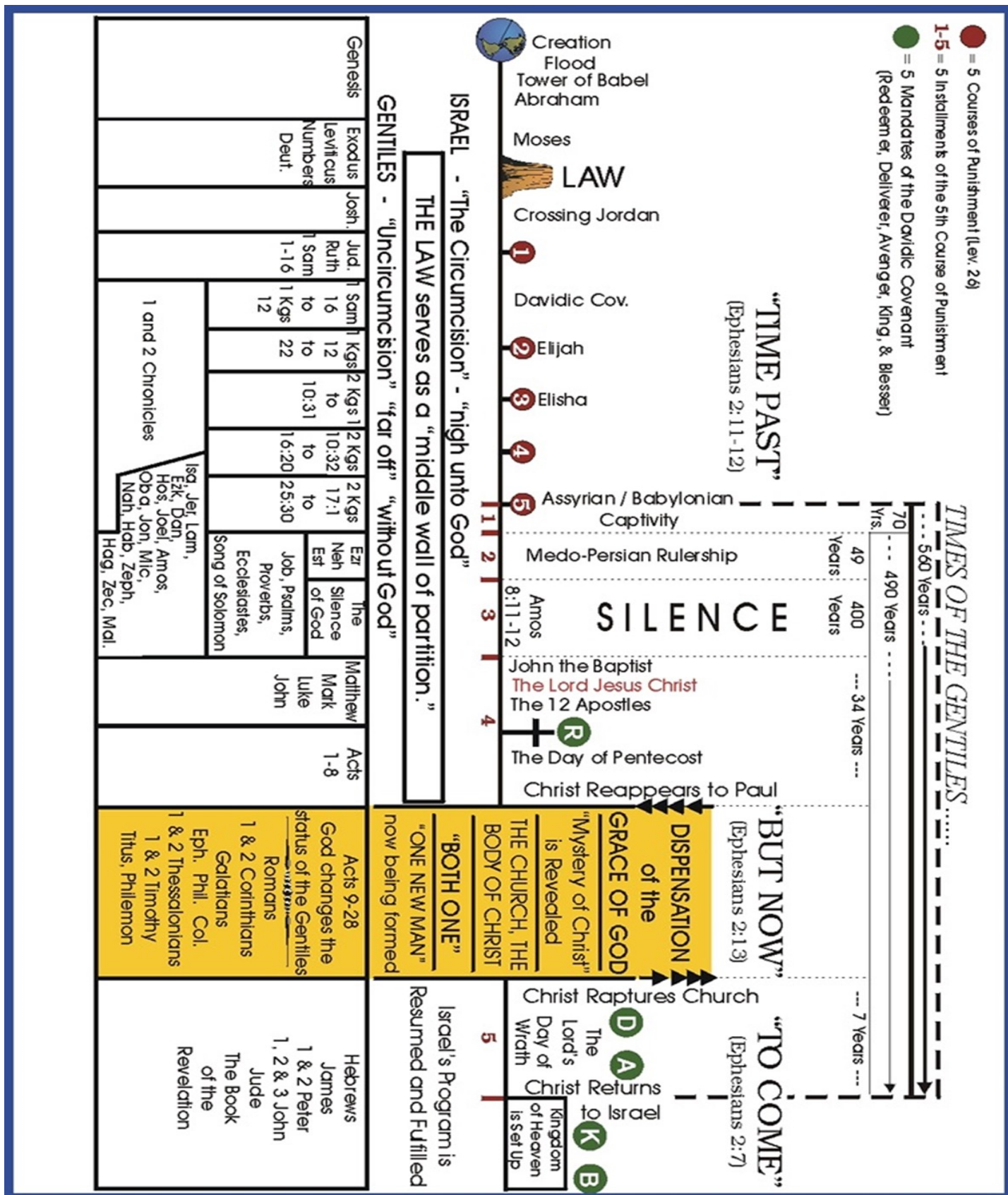


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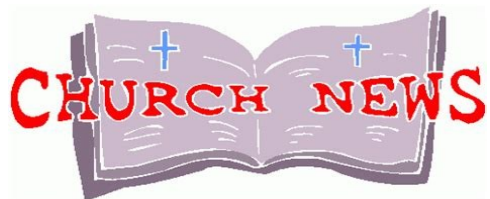


EXPERIENCE

# CHART OF THE WHOLE BIBLE







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1. 1 Cor. 1:23 2. Rom. 16:25 3. 2 Tim. 2:15

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