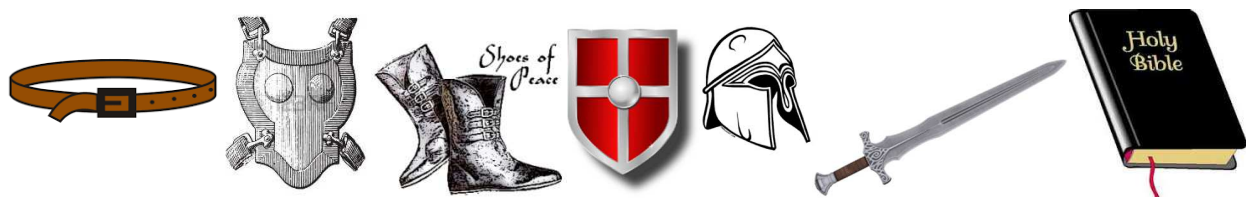


Spiritual Strategic Warfare



*”Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place” **Ephesians 6:14***

*”And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace” **Ephesians 6:15***

*“above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts (arrows) of the wicked one” **Ephesians 6:16***

*”And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God ...” **Ephesians 6:17.***

*“For the word of God is quick (alive), and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow (bone), and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart...” **Hebrews 4.12.***

Zidkiyah Yisrael

Are You A Grace Hater and Killer?

The Biblical Use of the Term “**Grace**.” The word “**grace**” is not always used in the same sense in Scripture, but has a variety of meanings. In the Old Testament we have the word chen (adj. chanun), from the root chanan. The noun may denote gracefulness or beauty, **Proverbs 22:11; 31:30**, but most generally means favour or good-will. The Old Testament repeatedly speaks of finding favour in the eyes of God or of man. The favour so found carries with it the bestowal of favours or blessings. This means that **grace** is not an abstract quality, but is an active, working principle, manifesting itself in beneficent acts,

Genesis 6:8; 19:19; 33:15; Ex. 33:12; 34:9; I Sam 1:18; 27:5; Esth. 2:7. The fundamental idea is, that the **blessings graciously bestowed are freely given**, and not in consideration of any claim or merit. The New Testament word *charis*, from *chairein*, “to rejoice,” denotes first of all a pleasant external appearance, “loveliness,” “agreeableness,” “acceptableness,” and has some such meaning in **Luke 4:22; Col. 4:6.** A more prominent meaning of the word, however, is *favour* or *good-will*, **Luke 1:30; 2:40, 52; Acts 2:47; 7:46; 24:27; 25:9.** It may denote the kindness of beneficence of our **Yeshua** who is our Lord, **II Cor. 8:9**, or the favour manifested or bestowed by God, **II Cor. 9:8** (referring to material blessings); **I Peter. 5:10.** the word is expressive of the emotion awakened in the heart of the recipient of such favour, and thus acquires the meaning “gratitude” or “thankfulness,” **Luke 4:22; I Cor. 10:30; 15:57; II Cor. 2:14; 8:16; I Timothy 1:12.** In most of the passages, however, in which the word *charis* is used in the New Testament, it signifies the unmerited operation of God in the heart of man, affected through the Holy Spirit. While we sometimes speak of *grace* as an inherent quality, it is in reality the active communication of divine blessings by the inworking of the Holy Spirit, out of the fulness of Him who is “full of *grace* and truth,” **Rom. 3:24; 5:2, 15; 17:20; 6:1; I Cor. 1:4; II Cor. 6:1; 8:9; Eph. 1:7; 2:5, 8; 3:7; I Pet. 3:7; 5:12.**

In **1 Peter 1:13** *charis* is the future heavenly blessedness that Christians are to receive; in **3:7** it is the present gift of “life.” In the second place, *charis* is the word for God’s favor, a sense of the term that is especially refined by Paul (see below). But God’s favor differs from man’s in that it cannot be conceived of as inactive. A favorable “thought” of God’s about a man involves of necessity the reception of some blessing by that man, and “to look with favor” is one of the commonest Biblical paraphrases for “bestow a blessing.” Between “God’s favor” and “God’s favors” there exists a relation of active power, and as *charis* denoted both the favor and the favors, it was the natural word for the power that connected them. This use is very clear in **1**

Corinthians 15:10, where Paul says, “not I, but the *grace* of God which was with me” labored more abundantly than they all: *grace* is something that labors. So in **2 Corinthians 12:9**, “My *grace* is sufficient for thee: for my power is made perfect in weakness”; compare **2 Timothy 2:1**, “strengthened in the *grace*,” and **1 Peter 4:10**, “stewards of the manifold *grace*.”

“*grace*” is almost a synonym for *the Spirit*, and there is little real difference between “full of the *Holy Spirit*” and “full of *grace* and power” in **Acts 6:5,8**, while there is a very striking parallel between **Ephesians 4:7-13** and **1 Corinthians 12:4-11**, with “gifts of *grace*” in the one passage, and “gifts of *the Spirit*” in the other. And this connection between *grace* and *the Spirit* is found definitely in the formula “*Spirit of grace*” in **Hebrews 10:29**.

There is no word in Hebrew that can represent all the meanings of *charis*, and in the Septuagint *charis* itself is used, practically, only as a translation of the Hebrew *chen* (חֵן), “favor,” this restriction of meaning being due to the desire to represent the same Hebrew word by the same Greek word as far as possible. And *chen*, in turn, is used chiefly only in the phrase “find favor” (**Genesis 6:8**, etc.) Much nearer Paul’s use of *charis* is *ratson* (רָצוֹן), “acceptance,” in such passages as **Isaiah 60:10**, “In my favor have I had mercy on thee”; **Psalms 44:3**, “not ... by their own sword ... but ... because thou wast favorable unto them.” Perhaps still closer parallels can be detected in the use of *chesed* (חֶסֶד), “kindness,” “mercy,” as in **Exodus 20:6**, etc.

Paul tell us that the power of *grace* is more powerful than *sin* for he says that *sin* is not to rule over us. When he says that we are not under the law but under *grace*, what he is saying is that *grace* has more authority than *sin* giving power to obey the *Most High God’s* law. We are not under the law’s guilt and condemnation when Paul says that we will not

continue to **sin**. When Paul says we will not **sin** he does not mean that we will never **sin**, what he means is that we will not willfully **sin**. Not to intentionally break God's commandment. Here is an example of this scenario. Let's say that a man is on death row waiting to be executed for murder. Waiting for the execution the man has been condemn according to the law. The man is guilty, and condemn to death in every aspect of the law for murder. Suppose the Governor review the man's case and decide to pardon him. Due to new evidence found regarding the case the Governor decide to pardon him. He is no longer under the penalty of the law to be executed but instead he has found **grace**. The law will no longer condemn him as he is justified as charges have been dropped. He is free to walk out of prison without any law enforcement laying a hand on him. Now that he is under **grace** does it mean that he is free to do whatever he wish, breaking the law? Of course not, he is still obligated to obey the law! The man should be more conscious of the law because he was given **grace** by the Governor. Out of gratitude and love he is grateful for another chance, and he will be very careful to honor the law of the state that granted him **grace**. Apostle Paul ask "*Do we then make void of the law through faith? God forbid yea we establish the law.*" **Romans 3:31**. Another example is a speeding ticket. You are driving your car over the speed limit and the state trooper pull you over and explain to you that you broke the speed limit. He/she is writing you a ticket and you try to plea with the officer explaining that you really have a family emergency on your hands and you are sorry for speeding. He/she decide to cut you some slack, so the ticket is torn up, and you are given a warning. Now that you have been given grace does this mean you can go back to speeding? Does this mean you can disobey the speed limit that is posted? Certainly not. What it does is make you conscious of paying more attention and being aware of the speed limit so you won't break the law. The same goes for being conscious of the **Most**

High God's law so you will not willfully or intentionally keep on sinning against God. **Jesus** says in **John 14:15** “ *If you love me keep my commandments.*” A true Christian will always need the law of God to point them to the path of righteousness and to the cleansing of Jesus who shed his blood.

Grace and the Law are not in competition with each other nor are they working against each other. The law points out our **sin**, grace will save us from our **sin**. The law is the will of the **Most High God**, and grace is the power to do the will of our God **Ahayah!** **Revelations 14:12** “*Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.*” Our obedience is the real test of our love for **Jesus**. It is necessary in our walk/faith with God. **James 2:20** “*But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?*”

Grace is in the Law, not separate from the Law. In fact, the only place where a person can find grace (that is, the promise of unmerited, saving favor from God) is in the Law God gave to Moses. Salvation is a gift from God. There is every reason to cling to the Law because therein is our only hope of escaping the **Lake of Fire** **Revelation 19:20; 20:14**. The fire is the final destination of all who are not pure in thought, word and deed i.e., me, you, and everyone else. The truth underlying all religions is that the consequence of human imperfection, i.e., **sin**, is separation from God, meaning spiritual death. Only the Bible offers a viable solution. God will impute His own purity to humans who claim **Jesus**, the unblemished blood sacrifice He made to pay the penalty for human **sin**. The God-given grace contract is our only means of escape from the terrible fate lying ahead.

This is the dilemma. In our natural state, we impure humans are separated from a pure and holy God. However, only if we become as perfect as God, which is impossible through our own efforts, can we

escape the **Lake of Fire** and have eternal life. “**Holy**” means “separated.” Once people gain salvation, they are no longer separated *from* God.

The good news is that God has remedied the situation at great cost to Himself. Grace, found only in the Law, is God’s commitment to accept—and eventually provide—the death of an unblemished substitute that pays the penalty on our behalf, enabling us to connect with Him and escape the **Lake of Fire**. Humans are saved from damnation and reconciled with God if they take Him up on His offer, which is a free gift stemming from His love for us. All we need do is claim coverage of the death of **Christ**. God will then impute to us the total purity of His Son. He will look at us through the lens of **Christ’s** perfection. This is our only hope. In **Leviticus 17:11**, God says: “*For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls, for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.*” If humans do not take God up on his offer? They will drop into the fire. This does not make God happy; He has no pleasure in the destruction of the wicked **Ezekiel 18:23**. He gives everyone a chance but He lets rebels go.

All the epistles in the New Testament are based on the Law and the Old Testament prophecies. Nowhere do the writers express the intention that they take pre-eminence over or be treated as basic, foundational teaching. The tragedy is that most Christians think Scripture is only the New Testament. The church has been knocked off its true foundation, which is the Law. This has paved the way for a damaging heresy that keeps people on the road to damnation. Tradition of the church seems to be the major basis for considering New Testament epistles as sacred writings. However, **Jesus** reprimand certain religious rulers, telling them that they were voiding the Word of God by their traditions. The writers of the epistles clearly make statements consistent with Scripture. However, they do not claim to be rewriting the Law, which is the most important aspect of God’s Word. The epistles are mostly editorialization and commentary on “the law and prophets.”

The Bible is the only place where mankind is offered grace, or mercy, attached to this universal law. Says Moses, curiously anticipating the right and left wing heresies **Deuteronomy 5:32**: “*Ye shall observe to do therefore as the Lord your God commanded you; ye shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left.*”

“Liberalism” comes from the Latin word *liber* meaning “free.” The liberal movement in the Protestant church advocates an interpretation of the Bible free from authoritarianism. Its cousin, “antinomianism,” comes from the Greek word *antinomia*: “anti” means “against,” and “nomos” means “law,” so it literally means “against any law.” Much of today’s Christian church rejects the notion of being under any kind of law but claims to be under grace, not realizing the contradiction in this.

The Two doctrine of perfectionism:

Antinomian doctrine	Merciless doctrine
Liberalism; no law	Performance-based merciless legalism
Secular humanism, Zen, New Age, Liberal Christianity	All non-Christian fundamentalism Merciless Christian fundamentalism
No judgment You are perfect now, just recognize it in yourself	Judgment w/o mercy You can attain sinlessness through your own efforts

In the Law, all humans are indicted as sinners destined for the **lake of fire**, but God offers mercy, or grace, i.e., freedom from damnation in the form of God given “bail.” The bad news is trumped by the good news, i.e., the gospel. Grace is irrelevant without the Law. Who needs bail if there is no sentence? If you abolish the Law, you also abolish any need for grace.

Many believe the law means condemnation with no mercy, but laws can defend as well as prosecute. In the Law God gave Moses, mercy trumps condemnation. Few realize that the Law is our ultimate defense.

The God of the Bible is unique. Nothing outside of God's Word makes a total gift of mercy; He alone allows mankind to cover themselves with His own perfection in the form of the shed blood of **Jesus**, sinless like His Father. **Jesus** is represented by all the **sin**, trespass and peace offerings in the Law (book of Leviticus). God committed Himself to forgive those who made these offerings.

The liberal church claim they are under **grace** and not under law, implying there are three different systems in place: a time of law and a time of **grace**. This means they accept antinomianism *and* merciless legalism. How? They see them as having been in force at different times. This means that a third heresy exists: dispensationalism, which says that God made fundamentally different salvation contracts over time, moving from merciless legalism to antinomianism. This is wrong. God made *one* basic covenant that has not changed from the beginning. It is expressed from Genesis all the way through **Christ**.

The modern Christian church has managed to do away with the very idea of the **Lake of Fire**. In fact, the church increasingly denies that anything bad lurks on the other side of death.

Merciless doctrine say: *Jesus came to make us better people and save us from committing sins so we can avoid hell, if there is one.*

Antinomian doctrine say: *Jesus came to help us see how good we are. A loving God would never let anyone go to hell.*

As to **Jesus** coming to make us better people, well, salvation does initiate a transformation in our hearts, but humans never become sinless. And He certainly did not come to show us how good we are. Sinless **Jesus** came to be the essential blood atonement spelled out in Leviticus. He died in our place, taking on our punishment in order that God would

impute to us his sinlessness. The human race would be damned eternally if it were not for the shed blood of **Christ**. When we claim **Christ** as our cover, God imputes, or attributes, to us his perfection, and we become holy, that is, we are separated into his flock. Meanwhile, we remain sinners, but in a state of forgiveness.

Few Christians are aware that the Law has always had two very distinct parts, or functions. For present purposes, let us call these Part One and Part Two, or condemnation versus mercy, prosecution versus defense. The two parts do *not* correspond to the Old and New Testaments, but run side-by-side all the way through the Bible. The distinction between Parts One and Two is very, very important.

Part One of the Law: the moral code defining **sin** and punishment. Part One of the Law is an all-encompassing focus on man's relations with God and other men. It is a code of behavior and emotion that at best can only be partially executed by humans. According to **Jesus**, the entire Law will be in effect "*till heaven and earth pass*" **Matthew 5:18**. The Law says all **sin**, no matter how minor, is punished by death, i.e., spiritual death, total separation from God leading to the **Lake of Fire** after physical death. Before the fall, there was only one rule—not eating the fruit of the tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. After the Fall, the mandate went from one statute to more than six hundred, from one prohibition to a locked cage applying to every ungodly act, thought and emotion. However, the good news is that in **Christ**, God hands us the key that lets us out of the cage.

It has always been utterly impossible for us to keep Part One with its many codes applying to thought and behavior. Even if humans could wipe themselves perfectly clean and purify their minds and actions at any point in life, which is a million miles from being a practical possibility, any previous infringement, even a minor one, would still doom them. The record would have to be clean from start to finish. Says **Ezekiel 33:13**: "*...If he trust to his own righteousness, and commit*

iniquity, all his righteousness shall not be remembered; but for his iniquity that he hath committed, he shall die for it.”

The New Testament writer, James, picks up on this:

“For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all” **James 1:10**.

Nothing short of perfection is acceptable, and yet the Law’s exacting regulation pervades every nook and cranny of human functioning so thoroughly that humans cannot be other than law-breakers, or sinners. God is pure, holy and undefiled but humans are the opposite.

Sidenote: The connection between sin and eternal separation from God is explicit in only a few places in Scripture after the account in Genesis. The following quote is from Ezekiel:

“The soul that sinneth, it shall die.” **Ezekiel 18:4, 20**.

Paul makes several references to the sin/death connection he found in Scripture:

“For the wage of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” **Romans 6:23**; *“by the offense of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation”* **Romans 5:18**; and *“sin hath reigned unto death.”* **Romans 5:21**.

There would be no peace of mind under a God who has an impossible standard and forces anyone who does not reach it to suffer eternal damnation. Sadly, a growing number of misinformed people have the impression the God of the Bible is this way. But He is the only One who is not; He offers mercy in the Law, but anyone who *rejects* His mercy is in serious trouble.

Part Two of the Law is God’s gift of a way out for mankind. God offers mercy in the substitutionary blood atonement covenant. The good news is that the Law has always given mankind a way out of eternal damnation. It states that God will accept a blood sacrifice in instead of human spiritual death. He commands us to claim His gift of payment of the penalty for our sin. **Christ**, who is God in human form, made the essential blood payment Himself on our behalf. God has given us the

payment; all we need do is embrace it. The blood of **Jesus** on the altar of Calvary is necessary and sufficient to atone for the sins of humanity, and it is a total gift.

Think about this for a moment. **Jesus** had to die because the law had been broken! Sin demanded death. If the law could have been done away with, the penalty of sin would have been set aside also. “*For where no law is, there is no transgression*” **Romans 4:15**. So strong was the authority of that unchangeable law that God himself could not abolish it, not even to save his own Son from death!

Do you see that no greater demonstration could have been made to prove the permanence of the Ten Commandments? In the entire universe God could not have displayed a more convincing and irrefutable argument in favor of his law. In the face of this tremendous exhibition, a great multitude misguided people belittle the government of God by belittling his law! They seem not to understand that the law is a reflection of his holiness and righteousness. To speak of it being abolished is to commit treason against the divine government of **the Most High** God. We are to look to **Christ** who kept it perfectly, who fulfill the righteousness of the law, the just requirement of the law. Apostle Paul says “*I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.*” **Galatians 2:20**.

God’s **grace** has been with us throughout the entire bible. Some examples are: Adam and Eve received God’s grace after they committed the first sin. Because of their sin, Adam and Eve deserved death and eternal separation from God. God justly banished them from the garden and placed a curse upon creation, but He also demonstrated His **grace** in two ways.

First, He covered the shame of their nakedness by clothing Adam and Eve with animal skins. The sacrifice of these animals to cover mankind is a picture of the ultimate sacrifice, **Jesus Christ**, the “*lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world*” **John 1:29**.

Second, in **Genesis 3:15**, we have what scholars call the “proto-gospel” because it is the first time the gospel appears in the Bible, if only in seed form. In this verse, God promises to send a seed of the woman to undo the curse and destroy the serpent, and as New Testament believers, we know **Jesus Christ** is the fulfilment of this promise.

Mankind did not deserve this grace back in Genesis, and we don’t deserve it now. God would be completely just to leave mankind to **sin** and death. But He doesn’t. That’s grace.

What about Israel, who was given the **Ten Commandments** and the rest of the law? Did God operate with grace toward the nation of Israel? The basis of God’s relationship with Israel was His gracious election of Abraham. Scripture says that Abraham “*believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness*” **Genesis 15:6**, which Paul argues is a demonstration that Abraham was justified by grace rather than works **Romans 4:2-5, 16**. The doctrine of justification by **grace** was an Old Testament doctrine long before Paul taught it in the New!

It’s also important to recognize that God gave Israel the law after He saved them. When Israel cried out for deliverance in Egypt, God didn’t respond by saying, “You want me to save you? Obey this law first, and then I’ll see what I can do.” He chose to bestow unmerited favor upon an undeserving people. God’s **grace** is further borne out by the final means of their deliverance—the 10th plague. God’s wrath was poured out on Egypt through the death of every firstborn son. Israel, too, was deserving of God’s wrath, but He gave them a means of escape. He promised to

“passover” every home that brushed the blood of the Passover lamb on their doorposts, and so the Israelites were spared.

God is gracious toward individuals, as well. For example, when the Israelites crossed over the Jordan to conquer the land of Canaan, they first sent out spies to gather information **Joshua. 2:1**. When they went into Jericho, the spies were hidden by a Canaanite prostitute named Rahab, and as a result, she and her family were saved from the city’s destruction. These foreigners whose matriarch was a professional sinner were even given a place among Israel. The narrative continually refers to Rahab as “Rahab the prostitute,” as if to reinforce the point that no one is so far gone into **sin** that they are beyond the reach of God’s **grace**.

Consider David, one of the most well-known characters in the Old Testament. He is called “*a man after God’s own heart*” **1 Samuel. 13:14**, but in case you forgot, this “ideal” king impregnated his military officer’s wife, tried to trick him into believing the baby was his, and when that didn’t work, had him killed to cover it up. David’s son died because of his **sin**. But listen to how he talked to God: “*I acknowledged my **sin** to you, and I did not cover my **iniquity (lawlessness)**... and you forgave the **iniquity (lawlessness)** of my **sin**... For you, O Lord, are good and forgiving, abounding in steadfast love to all who call upon you*” **Psalms. 32:5; 86:5**. Only a God of immense grace could act in this way to a man with David’s moral failings.

Then there’s Jonah. Jonah is called by God to preach to Nineveh—a nation that was guilty of some of the most heinous war crimes in the ancient world, atrocities that were even committed against God’s own people. Jonah didn’t want to go, so he fled to the farthest corner of the earth in the opposite direction. This is not because Jonah was nervous about public speaking; it’s because he knew that God was gracious and would have mercy on these wicked heathens if they responded positively

to his preaching. And this is exactly what happened! Jonah preached an incredibly short sermon (just five Hebrew words are recorded), and the whole city of Nineveh repented, thereby avoiding the destruction which Jonah wanted so badly to come upon them.

Jonah was angry at God for His mercy and complained to the Lord, *“That is why I made haste to flee to Tarshish; for I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and relenting from disaster”* **Jonah 4:2**. This description of God’s character comes from **Exodus 34:6** and is repeated at least 10 other times throughout the Old Testament. Jonah knew his Old Testament and the gracious God who stands at its center. He fled from the call of God because he knew the God calling him was more gracious than he was. Jonah, like us, wanted judgment on his enemies. But he served a God who loved to show grace to those least worthy of it.

Too often the Christian church divide and separate **grace** from obedience, when the Bible teaches the interrelationship of **grace** and obedience.

Grace is God’s unmerited love and pardon toward us **Titus 3:4-5**; **Romans 5:10**. No one who has ever lived, with the sole exception of **Jesus Christ**, has ever deserved grace. And no amount of our effort can earn us God’s **grace**. **Grace** is a gift from God.

However, grace does not give us a right to **sin**. Paul asked whether Christians should continue in **sin** just so grace should abound, he answered definitively: “Certainly not!” **Romans 6:1-2**. Rather, by our faith, we “uphold the law” **Romans 3:31**. If we **sin**, we commit **lawlessness**—we break God’s law **1John 3:4**! We cannot break a law that does not exist! Instead, we use the **Holy Spirit** that God has given to

us, and through that Spirit we grow in grace and righteousness, able to receive God's gift of eternal life **Romans 6:20-22**.