

# The Reign of Grace

(Rom 5:21)

- Remember the context, and that Paul is proving the assurance of justification by faith
- I. “That as,...even so...”
  - A) This is another in the line of comparisons in Paul text to show the “much more” of Christ -vs- Adam
    - 1. As strong as sin’s power has been proven and experienced to be, the power of God and His purposes in grace are greater
      - i. Sin’s power (reign) is magnified by the Law of God and death
        - a) Grace is proven to be even more powerful in the salvation of sinners to eternal life
- II. “The **reign** of grace” (God’s sovereignty)
  - A) Reign- “to be king, to exercise supreme authority, to rule over all” (holding the reigns)
    - 1. Every kingdom/government has a method of ruling, a policy or principle that it intends to enforce or carry out
      - i. That kingdom sets up its constitution and organizes its government to accomplish those goals
    - 2. God’s Kingdom is certainly no less organized and planned than the governments of men
      - i. Acts 2:23- “Predeterminate counsel and foreknowledge of God”
        - a) Grace set up the final outcome and planned every single step to achieve it
  - B) Eph 1:3-13- Grace was set upon the throne in the council meeting between the Godhead before the foundation of the world
    - 1. Grace is the attribute of God that He has placed above every other
      - i. Grace is not a reaction of God to man’s sin
      - ii. Grace is not haphazard or contingent upon man
      - iii. There is no “plan B” with a Sovereign God
      - iv. There is no such thing as a “pause of the prophetic clock”
        - a) For this to be true, the reign of sin would be greater than the reign of grace, and man’s will greater than God’s will
        - b) This would be in complete contradiction to what Paul is establishing, the assurance of salvation in Christ
  - C) Law and grace are not opposites
    - 1. The opposite of grace is merit

2. "Grace" did not begin at cross, on Pentecost, or with Paul
  - i. Grace was planned before foundation of world and first revealed in the garden of Eden
    - a) Gen 3:15- Reign of grace greater than reign of sin
      - 1) This is not the beginning of "grace" but is instead the first pronouncement of God's reign of grace
      - 2) Grace is more powerful than sin, and grace never breaks the Law, it works within the confines of the Law just as it did in Gen 3:21
      - 3) God gave Aaron (grace) when He gave Moses (law)
    - b) God set grace upon the throne just as He set the Law of Gravity in nature
      - 1) God ordered creation and He orders the new creation
      - 2) Science can only function because of the laws God has set in nature
  - D) The supreme characteristic of the reign of grace is righteousness and life, even as the supreme characteristic of the reign of sin is unrighteousness and death
    1. The righteousness of grace is proven by the resurrection of Christ, overcoming even death and yet perfectly keeping the Law
    2. Rom 7:15-21- Shows the strength of sin's reign over the flesh to the extent that the remaining portion still battles on
      - i. Luke 11:17-23- Only the "stronger man" can spoil the "strong man"
        - a) A government can state its plans, but if it doesn't have the power to carry them out, then it becomes laughingstock
          - 1) Ex 32:11-14- "Lord, what will the Egyptians say?"

### III. The reign of grace historically

- A) The reign of grace in the O/T is linked to prophecy
  1. Amos 3:7- God reveals His plans through the prophets
    - i. God says "Here's what I AM going to do" and then He does it, no one being able to stop Him
    - ii. He overcomes all to achieve His purposes, even sin in the elect
      - a) Gen 50:20- The example of Joseph and his brother's sin
      - b) Rom 8:31-38- "If God be for us, who can be against us?"
  2. Gen 3:15- God makes His purposes known to Satan and man (Salvation History)
    - i. 1 John 3:8- "Destroy the works of the devil"
    - ii. Satan has spent all of history going about trying to stop this from happening (just as he attempted to stop God from being glorified by His creatures)
      - a) Gen 4- Cain kills Abel, but God gives Seth

- b) Gen 6- Cain's line marries into Seth's line and corrupts entire race, but God saves Noah
- c) Gen 11- Man unifies under it's own king (Nimrod) in opposition to God at Babel, but God scatters them and calls Abram out of line of Shem
- d) Abram puts himself under the dominion of evil kings, but God delivers him
- e) Abraham and Sarah are dead to producing promised Seed, but God gives life from the dead (Isaac)
- f) Jacob is certain to die at the hands of Esau, but God delivers him
- g) Judah refuses to obey God's command, and even falls to prostitution, but Gos gives Phares through it
- h) Israel goes into bondage under Pharaoh, but God delivers them a nation with spoils
- i) David is anointed King but then places himself in battle against Goliath, but God kills Goliath and delivers David better for it
- j) David sins horribly with Uriah/Bathsheba, but God gives Solomon through it
  - 1) The Lord is constantly showing His purposes, and then declares Himself sovereign by accomplishing those purposes against all opposition

B) The time is set by God as well, and cannot be postponed, not a second

- 1. Gen 15- 400 years prophesied
- 2. Jer 29- 70 years prophesied
- 3. Dan 9- 1<sup>st</sup> coming of Christ prophesied
  - i. Gal 4:4- "When the fulness of the time was come"
- 4. Mark 13:32- Father has set time of 2<sup>nd</sup> coming as well

#### IV. The reign of **grace** individually

A) Grace reigns in spite of the unworthiness of the elect, as well as their disobedience

- 1. Matt 1- The genealogy of Christ reminds us of this
  - i. Murder, incest, adultery, captivity, corruption all seen in the names

B) We tend to think of salvation as the day we went to a bible study, or attended a church and believed and then it all began

- 1. The real question we need to ask is "how was I even alive at that point at all?"
  - i. Rom 8:28-30- That's how! (God works in an orderly preplanned way)
    - a) Foreknowledge- Individually chosen by Father before the world was
      - 1) Amos 3:2- "You only have I known of all nations"
      - 2) Matt 7:21-23- "I never knew you"

- b) Predestinated- Planned every single aspect
  - 1) Eph 1:3-7, 1 Pet 1:2, John 6,10,17
  - 2) Eph 2:10- God hath before ordained that we should do “good works”
- c) Called- God sends the seed of the general call from the head to the heart of the believer (Lydia)
  - 1) Regeneration- Seed germinates and sprouts
  - 2) Justification- God “prophesies” the sprout perfect and fruitful
  - 3) Sanctification- God goes about supplying all that is needed and overcoming every weed of obstacle
  - 4) Glorification- God brings for the fruit in perfection just as He said, cursed earth notwithstanding
    - (a) This entire process is due to the reign of grace!
    - (b) God hath set His grace upon the elect, and they will be saved completely!
    - (c) “God said it, that settles it!
      - (1) Eph 2:8-9- ALL is by grace

V. The **power** of the reign of grace throughout history

- A) Satan tempts Eve in the garden, believing God’s justice to be greater than His grace, because Satan was not the object of God’s grace
  - 1. Gen 3:15-21- Grace prevails (in Christ)
- B) 2 Cor 4:4- Satan set himself up as “god of this world”
  - 1. Eph 2:1-3- He also had a “plan” (course) to achieve his goal
    - i. Col 2:15-16- But Christ triumphed over him in it
    - ii. Christ has proven Himself “King of kings and Lord of lords”
- C) Time and again it seems the world has almost prevailed over the Kingdom of God, but the reign of grace always triumphs
  - 1. Gen 6, Gen 11, Ex 1, Ex 15, captivity in Babylon, the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ, Dark Ages, today
    - i. John 1:1-13- But light always overcomes darkness
- D) Look at the power of the reign of grace in individuals throughout history
  - 1. Cyrus, Saul of Tarsus, Sosthenes, John Newton, me!