

THE BOOK ROMANS

“Grace & Peace to You”

Voice of China and Asia

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ROMANS Lesson 3, Parts 1 and 2: GRACE & PEACE TO YOU

ROM 1:1 & 7 **Paul**, a servant of CHRIST JESUS, called to be an APOSTLE, set apart for the gospel of GOD...

To all those in ROME who are loved by GOD and called to be saints:

Grace to you and peace from GOD our FATHER and the LORD JESUS CHRIST.

AN ANCIENT CHRISTIAN SALUTATION

ROM 1:7B “...Grace to you and peace from GOD our FATHER and the LORD JESUS CHRIST.

I am taking the title for my ROMANS SERIES from this familiar phrase used by the Apostle Paul. Whether he was the “originator” or not, it is definitely true that he used it consistently in his Letters, and probably in his personal greetings.

For Paul, it becomes a “*summation*” of all he would write, teach, and preach.

It is used at the beginning of every Letter (3x’s accompanied by the insertion of “*mercy (M)*”).

ROM 1:7; 1 COR 1:3; 2 COR 1:2; GAL 1:3; EPH 1:2; PHIL 1:2; COL 1:2;
1 THESS 1:1; 2 THESS 1:2; PHLM 3; 1 TIM 1:2(M); 2 TIM 1:2(M); TITUS 1:4(M)

When something is repeated, over and over, we might either ignore it as empty words...

<< I know I say “um” way too often... I hope you can ignore it. I’m trying to do better. >>

OR we could see that it is something that needs to be emphasized for the very reason that we would forget or ignore it. Remember during the early “panic-filled” days of CoVid19 we were told:

<< Wash your hands... Wash... Wash... >> They even made a catchy little “Rap” song...

ROM 1:7B “...Grace to you and peace ... from GOD our FATHER and the LORD JESUS CHRIST.

Echoed in Peter with added insight...

2 PETER 1:2 May grace [CHARIS] and peace [EIRENE] be multiplied [PLETHYNO] to you in [through] the knowledge [EPIGNOSIS] of God and of Jesus our Lord.

It is found so frequently in Early Christian Literature that it is possible that the phrase became a “secret code” passed between believers in order to recognize one another:

“Grace and Peace to you...” – “From God our Father...”

FOR Paul it was much more:

GRACE: (CHARIS)

The word “grace” is probably the greatest word in the N.T., greater even than “love,” for grace is love in action, and therefore includes it.

<< An endowment of favor, power, position, access without regard to merit or demerit.

<< A gift that is freely bestowed at the Givers initiative...

<< *And it is directly for the good of the recipient*

YET... God's grace is an offence to so many.

WHY would anyone NOT want a gift that is offered without merit, that overcomes all weaknesses, restores a proper relationship, brings joy and peace?

Why? Because "GRACE" also removes all our own merit. It declares our "need" for something outside ourselves... and has no regard for self-worth.

Consider Jesus' OWN definition of what HE means by "Grace"

2 COR 12:8-9 Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. ⁹ But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

- The NEED for grace presupposes the fact of "lack / need / weakness"

IF I could do it MYSELF... I don't need grace. I have MERIT... I earned what I have... and I deserve it!

- BUT... Grace also says, "Your effort / merit / strength is NOT sufficient!"

We don't mind when our weakness / or bad is taken away...

NEITHER DO we LIKE IT when OUR strength / good is unaccepted...

- The Pharisees, the proud, the arrogant... had no place for Jesus and His message of Salvation...

And so, it is the same today... YET there is so much to gain when we "bow ourselves to receive HIS grace through the Lord Jesus Christ"

My "Life" before July 20th, 1972

*Isolated; Conceited; YET Filled with Rage, Anger, and Depression Considered ways to end my life
I gave myself to perversion, alcohol and drugs...*

- *Attending a CHURCH OF CHRIST revival*
- *Finally SAW the true sacrifice of Jesus death on the Cross to TAKE AWAY my sin...*
- *My life was NOT MINE... He bought me*
- *The reality finally was revealed, and my heart was overwhelmed...*
- *I NEEDED that... I needed HIM!*

>> AUGUSTINE: "When God pours out His GRACE, He pours it INTO empty hands. If your hands are full of YOU: your works, your achievements, your goodness, - He has nothing to pour His GRACE into."

PEACE: - (Eirene)

The Greek word "peace" means, "that which has been bound together again after having been separated." The verb means "to bind together that which has been separated."

- THAT IS: WHEN things become disjointed, separated, there is NO FEELING OF tranquility, comfort, well-being...
- There is NO stability, NO security, NO Hope... NO PEACE
- PEACE... Brings a "restoration / recovery / reparation" – THIS is the result of binding together things that have become separated.

BUT Something has to “PRECEED” this PEACE... Someone / Something HAS TO ACT in order to “change” the situation... THAT is **GRACE**

- THEN that **pleasant, satisfying** feeling of **tranquility, comfort, and well-being** is realized...
- THAT is **PEACE!**

*I can put lemon juice in milk and cause it to separate...
BUT no matter what I do, **I CANNOT get it restored***

There are numerous things of this world that cause our lives to be **separated**, become **disjointed**, filled with **turmoil, isolated**, and feeling **forgotten**... And **SIN is #1**

BUT...Through His GRACE ... HIS Peace is available as HE restores and binds together what has been separated...

THE ORDER OF THESE WORDS

In the order of the manifestation of God's purposes in salvation, the reception of GRACE **must** come first
The World... people ... cry out for “PEACE” – but the world’s Peace will never “restore all that is out-of-order” in our world... in their lives...

WE NEED GRACE:

HEBREWS 4:16 *Let us then with confidence draw near to the **throne of grace**, that we **may receive mercy** and **find grace** to help in **time of need**.*

AND PEACE:

JOHN 14:27 *“I leave the gift of peace with you—my peace. **Not the kind of fragile peace given by the world, but my perfect peace**. Don’t yield to fear or be troubled in your hearts—instead, be courageous!”*
[The Passion Bible]

The reception of God’s “**GRACE**” offered through the gift of Jesus Christ in His death and resurrection... BRINGS US **the abundance of that Grace** offered to **“help in our time of need”**

THIS Opens the way for God to **“Bind together all that was broken, scattered, divided, estranged...”**

And establish **“PEACE”** for those who CALL upon Him!

THE GOD OF PEACE:

The “doctrinal” portion of the Letter ends with a Prayer... **For PEACE**

ROM 15:33 *“May the God of peace be with you all.”* This is WHO God is...

He is **the God of peace** in the sense that **HE alone** can give peace.

As Paul writes, it is a peace that **“transcends all understanding”** (PHIL 4:7)

[SO] ...do not be [stop being] anxious about anything, but [instead] in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses [is superior to] all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

- **This PEACE** is “superior to / better than” having human understanding of how God will bring me through “whatever trial that COULD produce anxiety.”
- I may NOT understand...I don't need to... BUT **His PEACE fills me!**

The title ‘**the God of peace**’ appears throughout Paul’s writings... in various contexts”

Rom 16:20 The **God of peace** will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

Phil 4:9 What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the **God of peace** will be with you.

1 Thess 5:23 Now may the **God of peace** himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴ He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.

Heb 13:20 Now may the **God of peace** who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, ²¹ equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

2 Cor 13:11 Finally, brothers, rejoice. Aim for restoration, comfort one another, agree with one another, live in peace; and the **God of love and peace** will be with you.