

Copyright 2017 by Lorri Frandsen.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be used or reproduced in any form or by any means, without prior permission from the author, except in the case of brief quotations in articles and reviews.

Bible - New International Version

Published by Grace Life Ministries, Box 3583, Courtenay, BC, Canada

Butterfly Symbol

The butterfly has been called a winged flower or flying gem because of its ethereal beauty. But a butterfly doesn't start out beautiful. A butterfly's life begins as an ugly caterpillar that hatches from an egg. These caterpillars have ravenous appetites and eat almost constantly, sometimes completely destroying crops and damaging trees and shrubs. After going through this destructive phase, the caterpillar is next wrapped in a cocoon which looks like a tomb or coffin. This phase lasts for several weeks during which it appears lifeless and dead. The third and final stage is when the cocoon breaks open and the beautiful butterfly emerges, spreading its wings to fly off into the heavens. It is a new creature, transformed and changed by the mystical process of metamorphosis.

The butterfly is a wonderful analogy of the Christian who, although beginning life as a condemned sinner who was dead in spirit and at enmity with God, subsequently becomes a new creation, with a new heart and mind that is alive and perfect with the divine nature of Christ Himself.

We therefore were buried with Him through baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may walk in newness of life...Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! (Romans 6:4, 2 Corinthians 5:17)

The Grace Gospel

It is written: "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no heart has imagined, what God has prepared for those who love Him." (1Corinthians 2:9)

The word 'grace' comes from the Greek word 'charis' which means kindness or favor. When applied to God, it refers to His kindness to those who do not deserve it. God's salvation comes to us because of His grace, or kindness.

"For by grace are you saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves."
(Ephesians 2:8)

God's grace can be traced all the way back to the Garden of Eden to the very first humans, Adam and Eve, who represented their entire species. When they rebelled against God, after being tempted by the devil, they died spiritually and physically and that sentence of death passed on to all of mankind. There was a change inside their souls that filled them with guilt and fear. They could not even look at one another without shame. Their minds became filled with wicked thoughts and ideas and they ran to cover themselves, sewing fig leaves to hide their nakedness from one another. Their souls were now poisoned and they were destroyed spiritually. Before this, they had walked with God in the garden and enjoyed friendship with Him. Now they were afraid of God.

God is all knowing so one might wonder why God permitted Adam and Eve to be tempted in the first place. Why did He allow His human creation to make a decision that would separate them from the God who loved them and wanted to have a relationship with them? The answer is that God could not do otherwise. If God wanted a true love relationship with Adam and Eve, it was absolutely necessary that they be given the choice to obey Him or not. Without choice they would have been without personality, individuality, or freedom.

They would have resembled robots that can only function as programmed, unable to feel or express love. Nevertheless God had no intention of casting away humanity, so He did a strange thing. He made clothes from animal skins for Adam and Eve in order to cover their nakedness. He would have had to kill an animal in order to do that. It would have been the first animal sacrifice to cover the guilt of sin.

Very likely, since later animal sacrifices were most often lambs, and because the coming Savior would be described as a Lamb of God, the animal that God killed was a lamb.

And just as the divine Lamb would one day shed His blood and clothe humankind with His own righteousness, the earthly lamb sacrificed for Adam and Eve provided covering for their guilt and shame. Adam and Eve would likely have realized that God was showing mercy to them through this mysterious act. Perhaps they saw that God was, in effect, promising to cover mankind with righteousness and make him pure again sometime in the future. It's not certain how much Adam and Eve understood about God's plan for mankind, but His act of providing animal skins as covering clearly pointed to the greatest Sacrifice of all Who would one day do away with sin forever and bring great joy to His people. However, until the Savior arrived, Adam and Eve, including all their descendants, were cut off from God and placed under a death sentence.

The Holy God could no longer commune with them because their spirits were dead and their corrupted, mortal bodies were now unfit for heaven. This was how MAN BECAME A SINNER.

All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. (Romans 3:23)

Sin is transgressing God's law and includes such things as lying, lust, cheating, deceit, anger, evil thoughts, immoral behavior and more. The Bible states that those who sin will be judged according to the light they have from their conscience, and how they respond to it. The conscience is God's moral law written on the heart. Where people resist their conscience, they will receive condemnation. Where they obey it, they will be excused. But the Bible also says: *"There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands; there is no one who seeks God. All have turned away; they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good; not even one. Their throats are open graves; their tongues practice deceit. The poison of vipers is on their lips. Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness. Their feet are swift to shed blood; ruin and misery mark their ways, and the way of peace they do not know. There is no fear of God before their eyes."* (Romans 3:10-18)

In order for humans to have a relationship with a perfectly holy God, they have to be as holy as He is, but as the scriptures say, man is a sinner and is not able to meet that standard.

Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect. (Matthew 5:48)

Besides our conscience, God gave the 10 commandments to Moses to further explain what is required of mankind in order to be accepted by God.

These commandments comprise the Law, which must be obeyed in its entirety. Even one transgression nullifies the whole.

For whoever keeps the whole Law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it. (James 2:10)

Therefore no one will be declared righteous in God's sight by the works of the Law; rather, through the Law we become conscious of our sin. (Romans 3:20)

The Law silences every mouth and holds the entire world accountable to God. The Law will never declare anyone righteous in God's sight because everyone breaks the Law. This is a dilemma for humankind because GOD IS JUST and therefore MUST PUNISH SIN.

(God says) "I will by no means clear the guilty (Exodus 34:7) ^[L]_[SEP]The soul who sins shall die. " (Ezekiel 18:4)

Therefore we have a problem; we have all sinned. The penalty for sin is death. We need forgiveness so that we can have a right relationship with God. Fortunately there is another side to God. He is also LOVE. So, even though man cannot save himself, GOD IS MERCIFUL and DOES NOT WANT TO PUNISH US.

This is because GOD IS LOVE. (I John 4:8)

He says, ^[L]_[SEP]"I have loved you with an everlasting love". (Jeremiah 31:3)

Clearly, from all the scriptures in both Old and New Testaments, we can see that God has always desired His people to be in a close, intimate relationship with Himself. He loved Adam and Eve and He loves us as well. He had a plan to rescue us right from the beginning. After Adam and Eve plunged humanity into destruction, God mercifully instituted animal sacrifices to be carried out in the Temple, to signify that judgment had been carried out against sin, albeit only on a temporary basis. Animal sacrifices did not do away with sin. They only covered sin until a better Sacrifice came along that would do away with sin forever. This Supreme Sacrifice for sin had been promised for millennia, beginning with the lamb's blood shed in Eden which foreshadowed the death that would one day come to the Redeemer of mankind. He would take sin away forever and offer salvation as a free gift of grace. This Redeemer was JESUS CHRIST. Who exactly is Jesus Christ? ^[L]_[SEP]The Bible tells us clearly that He is the infinite ^[L]_[SEP]GOD-MAN.

^[L]_[SEP]In the beginning was the Word (Jesus) ... and the Word (Jesus) was with God ... and the Word (Jesus) became flesh and dwelt among us. (John 1:1,14)

SEP

Jesus Christ came to earth and lived a sinless life, but while on earth. He died on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins and rose from the grave to purchase a place for us in heaven.

All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned, every one, to his own way, and the Lord has laid on Him (Jesus) the iniquity of us all. (Isaiah 53:6) SEP

For a short time, Jesus Christ was on earth like one of us. He was in the likeness of sinful flesh, although He never sinned and didn't have the dead sin nature of Adam. The curse of death did not apply to Him but Jesus willingly volunteered to represent sinful mankind, becoming the Second Adam. Being human was essential if the Second Adam was to take on Himself the penalty for sin. Being sinless was essential if the Second Adam was to escape death and resurrect into new life. This is what Jesus did for us. He became the New Creation, a new humanity that had never existed before. To become a part of this New Creation, it was necessary to be 'reborn' with Christ's life formed within us.

Rebirth (also called regeneration) is moving from a dead spiritual state to one that is alive and eternal - from the old humanity (old man in Adam) to the new one (new man in Christ).

For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. (Colossians 3:3- 4)

The new creation did not inherit the sin disposition of Adam. It is an entirely new entity fashioned in the likeness of Jesus Christ, having His divine, eternal nature. As such, it is without sin.

For by one sacrifice He has made perfect forever those who are being made holy. (Hebrews 10:14)

The Law could rightfully condemn the old humanity because it was guilty of sin, but the Law can find nothing to condemn in the New Creation.

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death. (Romans 8:1)

You were taught to stop your old way of life. Your old way was full of deceitful desires. Now you are to be made new in the attitude of your minds. (Ephesians 4: 20-23)

Christ's righteousness is now our own. We have His nature, His heart, and His mind and are in complete unity with Him. It is impossible for us to be condemned for sin anymore. We have passed out of death into eternal life. We have come out of the Old Man and into the New, released out of bondage into freedom. We are no longer separated from God, but have been brought into close intimacy with Him. What Jesus

has accomplished for us is truly beyond what we could ever have thought or imagined! This was the great gift Jesus came to bring to all of us, and it does not depend on human effort. Only God's gracious kindness can rescue humanity. God offers salvation as a gift, not as something earned by His creatures.

HEAVEN (Eternal Life with God) IS A FREE GIFT.

The Bible says: **the GIFT of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 6:23)**

And because heaven is a gift, like any other genuine gift, IT IS NOT EARNED or DESERVED. Therefore, no personal effort, no good works, no religious deeds can get you to heaven.

By grace you have been saved through faith, and that NOT OF YOURSELVES. It is the gift of God, NOT OF WORKS, lest any man should boast. (Ephesians 2:8.9)

SO HOW DO WE BECOME PART OF THE NEW CREATION?

The key is FAITH

Faith is the key that opens the door to heaven.

Many people mistake two things for saving faith:

1. Just believing certain historical facts. The Bible says the devil believes in God, but that is not saving faith.
2. Just trusting God for temporary crises such as financial, family, or physical needs.

These are good, and we should trust Christ for these, but they are not saving faith!

SAVING FAITH is trusting in Jesus Christ alone for salvation.

Believe (trust) on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved . . . (Acts 16:31)

Faith is like a beggar getting a gift from a King. We don't deserve the gift of eternal life. But we can have it, if we have faith. It is our faith that causes us to know that the One who raised the Lord from the dead also raises us to live forever in His presence.

As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath.

But because of His great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions... For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast. (Ephesians 2:1-9)

God has reconciled us to Himself through Christ, no longer counting people's sins against them. Faith is simply taking God at His word, believing what He has said and done.

And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him. (Hebrews 11:6)

We are saved by faith and we walk by faith. The only works that have any eternal value are those born of faith. But this faith is not something we conjure up within ourselves or something we earn. It is given to us by God.

... it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. (Ephesians 2:8-9)

This is the message of the gospel that God wants the world to know.

Right at this present time God is making His appeal, asking people today:

WOULD YOU LIKE TO RECEIVE THE GIFT OF ETERNAL LIFE?

If the answer is 'yes', God is saying:

TRUST in what Jesus Christ has done for you on the cross, that He has died for YOU. If you are willing to be placed spiritually into Christ, it will mean that your old life (who you were before) will lie dead in the grave, and you will become a part of the New Creation, or New Humanity in Christ. Listen to what Jesus is saying....

Behold, I stand at the door and knock at the door of your life. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him. (Revelation 3:20)

RECEIVE JESUS CHRIST INTO YOUR LIFE AS LORD

...with the heart one believes to righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made to salvation, for whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. (Romans 10:10, 13)

He comes as Master and King. He made you. He bought you and He wants to take His rightful place in your life. Turn from your sins. Call on Him, asking Him for this gift right now. It is essential that as new believers, we follow Him only. God hates idolatry and has plainly told us that we are to worship no other gods, goddesses, nature spirits, nor any other creature or natural force. Those must be renounced and forsaken if we are to take Jesus Christ as Saviour. He wants to have our hearts entirely for Himself.

THOU SHALT HAVE NO OTHER GODS BEFORE ME. (Exodus 20:3-6)

The miracle transformation of new birth is not something you can see, because it is spiritual, but you will not be able to mistake the difference in your mind and heart once you have become born again. Like the amazing transformation of the caterpillar into a butterfly, you are now entirely new and different.

To show outwardly, in a symbolic way, what God has done on the inside, Christians are baptized with water. Baptism is an enactment of dying with Christ on the cross, and being resurrected to new life in Him.

It testifies to the world that we have been placed into Christ's Body (also called the Church or Bride). Quite often a believer also takes on a new name to signify that he/she is now a new creation with a new identity. As a new creature in Christ, you will now want to know more about your new life.

The first thing to realize is that you are....

DEAD TO THE LAW

The Bible describes Christians as having been baptized into the death of Christ Jesus, buried with Him, and then as Jesus was raised from the dead, we also were raised with Him so that we might live a new life.

Our old self was crucified with Jesus (i.e. put to death) so that it cannot now control our body (the flesh), although the body's fleshly urges still exist to trouble us at times. When our physical body dies, the flesh will then be eradicated. But even now we are to consider ourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. That's why it's ridiculous for us to let sin reign in our physical body so that we obey its evil desires.

Permitting sin to reign in our body is 'living in the flesh' and before we were saved, we could live in no other way. Our sin nature enslaved us.

However now, as born again believers, we surrender every part of our being to

Jesus. Sin is no longer our master.

Also, we are not under the Law anymore, which is where sin gets its power. No Law. No condemnation. No shame. And no enslavement to sin.

The Law only has authority over someone for as long as that person lives. Take for example how a married woman is bound to her husband by law as long as he is alive. However if her husband dies, she is released from the law that binds her to him. If she has sexual relations with another man while her husband is still alive, she is called an adulteress, but if her husband dies, she is released from that law and is not an adulteress if she marries another man. That's similar to what happens to us when we die to the Law through Christ's death on the cross. Using the analogy of the married woman, we were released from our former husband (the old man) and are now free to be married to another (Jesus, the New Man).

By dying to what once enslaved us, we have been released from the Law so that we now live in the new way of the Spirit, instead of the old way of the written code (Law).

This doesn't mean that the Law is sinful, though. The Law points us in the right direction (Christ as Savior) and that makes it important and useful.

Before this faith came, we were held in custody under the Law, locked up until faith should be revealed. So the Law became our guardian to lead us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. Now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian. (Galatians 3:23-25)

Without the Law, we would not have known what sin was. How would we know what coveting is if the Law's 10th commandment had not said, "You shall not covet."

As long as we didn't know it was wrong to covet, we felt no guilt when we did so, but when the commandment came, we found it impossible to keep from coveting. We realized how weak and sinful we were and we felt condemned by the Law. It stirred up guilt whenever we coveted and we had no power to stop doing it, even when we wanted to live differently. In fact, often we ended up doing the very things we wanted to get away from.

It was like a force living inside us, waging war against our mind and making us a prisoner of sin working inside us. What a wretched existence that was!! But thanks be to God, He rescued and delivered us through Jesus Christ our Lord! And because He did, we are absolutely free from any condemnation from God's

Law.

NOT IN THE FLESH

Even though our old life (old man, old nature) was crucified with Jesus Christ on the cross and is no longer who we are, as long as we are still in our physical body, we will still have the sinful urges that used to operate in our old nature. These urges continue to work through our physical bodies - if allowed. However as Christians, we do NOT have a sin nature, and we are not IN the flesh. We have a NEW nature and we walk by the Spirit, not the flesh. The fleshly urges that still operate through the body can be overcome by our faith in who we are in Jesus. Our new identification with Christ (having His righteous nature) will provide the confidence and power to say 'no' to fleshly urges. This is why it is so important to realize by faith that we cannot be condemned because we are perfect in Christ and are free to live righteously (as all true believers desire to do).

We have the life and divine nature of Christ and that perfect life cannot be condemned by the Law. Our will, mind, and conscience have been set free to follow the Holy Spirit so that we can live righteously without hindrance. We are now at peace with God. It is amazing what God has done for us! Once we were weak and sinful, but Jesus died for us, giving us the power to overcome sin and to live victoriously and righteously for Him.

INSEPARABLE FROM THE LOVE OF CHRIST

Before we became born again, we lived in the flesh, according to bodily appetites, with minds set on fleshly desires. Our minds were hostile to God, resulting in death, and we could not please God.

Now, as Christians, we have minds governed by the Spirit, so we have life and peace. God is well pleased with us, and even though our physical bodies will die like everyone else's because of sin's effect, the Holy Spirit inside us has given us resurrection life and made us immortal. So since we are alive because of the Spirit, our only obligation is to live by the Spirit. As children of God, we can live without fear of condemnation or death. God is our loving 'Papa' and we are His heirs, even co-heirs with Jesus Christ. Whatever Jesus receives in glory, we do too.

Even though we will share in Christ's sufferings, they are nothing compared with the glory we have in Christ. We have the Spirit, who guarantees our redemption and divine adoption. Everything that happens to us in the meantime is used by

God to work out for our best.

It is important to realize that our new reborn spirit is being conformed to the image of God's Son. As God's children, we bear a resemblance to our older Brother, Jesus. God predestined us to this, and those He predestined, He also called; those He called, He also justified; those He justified, He also glorified. Knowing all this, how can we doubt that God is for us? And if God is for us, who can be against us? He didn't spare his own Son, but gave Him up for us all. Since He did that, how can we ever doubt that He will not also graciously give us all things? Who can possibly accuse those whom God has chosen? Since He has justified us, who can condemn us? Absolutely no one. Who can separate us from the love of Christ? Can trouble, or hardship, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword do it? No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, can separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

CHOSEN BY GOD

Jesus said: "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws them, and I will raise them up at the last day. It is written in the Prophets: 'They will all be taught by God.' Everyone who has heard the Father and learned from Him comes to Me." (John 6:44-45)

Without the Holy Spirit's work in our hearts, we would never have received Jesus as our Savior. All sinners are dead spiritually and have no desire to come to God on their own. An unbeliever's mind is darkened. He is actually an enemy of God, which is exactly what we were before coming to Christ. It requires the work of the Holy Spirit to draw a person to Christ. Romans 9:16 emphasizes this: **It does not, therefore, depend on human desire or effort, but on God's mercy.**

It cannot depend on a person's human desire or effort because the Bible says that no one is righteous, understands, or seeks after God. Nobody - not even one person - does good. All are worthless.

As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands; there is no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one."(Romans 3:10-12).

So unless God has mercy and changes the human heart, no one comes to the Lord on his own. Every saved person must be 'drawn' to Christ by the Holy Spirit.

Everyone who has heard the Father and learned from Him comes to Me. (John 6:45)

MEMBERS OF CHRIST'S BODY

Our hearts have been reborn. We are led by God's Spirit who transforms us on the inside to be willingly obedient to the new, divine nature He has put within us. This new nature is like Christ's.

God has called together the peoples of the world to reflect His grace as the Church of Christ. We are all parts of Christ's Body, and each member belongs to the others. It is in this community that God's love is marvelously illustrated to the world. It is meant to showcase divine love, which is why we are called to be hospitable with the Lord's people who are in need, to bless those who persecute us, rejoice with those who rejoice, and feel pity for those who mourn. God is pleased when we are willing to be with people of low position, and when we refuse to repay evil for evil.

It is important to Him that we guard our reputation, always doing what is right in the eyes of everyone and trying to live in peace with everyone. If we are opposed or persecuted, God desires that we leave room for His wrath because only He can avenge. This can only be done in Christ by His grace. Our part is to feed our enemy if he is hungry, and give him something to drink if he is thirsty. That will bring conviction, like burning coals, on his head.

We are people who overcome evil with good, having only one debt - to love one another. Love fulfills the Law's commandments, "you shall not commit adultery," "you shall not murder," "you shall not steal," "you shall not covet." In fact the entire Law is summed up in this one command: "Love your neighbor as yourself." This is the Law of Love that characterizes the Holy Spirit and energizes the Christian's heart. Because the Holy Spirit indwells the New Creation, He is the only Law we need. There is no need for an external Law of commandments.

But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law. (Galatians 5:18)
Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. (2 Corinthians 3:17)

It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery. (Galatians 5:1)

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Against such things there is no law. (Galatians 5:23)

Now that we know our identity in Christ, there are some things we must be aware of, such as

FALSE TEACHERS

Throughout history the gospel has been distorted and its message has been weakened. Misguided and self-deceived teachers have promoted a false gospel for centuries and the end result has been spiritual chaos in the Church. The apostle Paul said that if anyone (himself included) or even an angel, preached a false gospel, they were under God's curse. Those who rely on the works of the Law are under a curse, because scriptures say that if one doesn't do EVERYTHING written in the Law, he is condemned by God. The only One who was able to obey the Law perfectly was Jesus, because He is God and therefore perfectly righteous. By making us new creatures, Jesus has set us free from the Law, so we cannot let ourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery. If we place ourselves under the Law, Christ can have no value for us. Christ and the Law don't mix. It's one or the other.

For those who are in Christ, all that counts is faith expressing itself through love. Legalists try to tear us away from freedom in Christ so as to put us into bondage. They are like yeast spreading through a lump of dough. Their false teaching creeps into the Church until the whole congregation is thrown into confusion. Such agitators should be denounced and rejected as heretics, but instead they often condemn Christians who teach grace as being the heretics. Their favorite accusation is that teaching the grace gospel will lead to sinful living.

Obviously we as free people do not use our liberty to indulge the flesh. We serve one another humbly in love, fulfilling the Love Commandment to "love your neighbor as yourself." (Galatians 5:15) To bite and devour each other would be destructive, and it would be contrary to the Spirit. The Holy Spirit is opposed to the flesh and fights against it.

But we, as Christians, are not IN the flesh and we are also not under the Law.

You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. (Romans 8:9)

For sin shall no longer be your master, because you are not under the Law, but under grace. (Romans 6:14)

When describing the acts of the flesh, we mean sexual immorality, idolatry,

witchcraft, hatred, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, etc.

Of course those who live like that will not inherit the kingdom of God. But Christians don't live in the flesh, even though they sometimes struggle against it. When the flesh rises up in our bodily members to tempt us to sin, we are not forced to obey it. The old nature, from which the flesh has its origins, has been crucified with Jesus on the cross. It was a once and for all execution. By killing off the old nature of the old humanity, the flesh has lost its power over us. The root of sin has been destroyed. Our faith in what Jesus accomplished on the cross effectually defangs the flesh, stripping it of its power over our lives.

So don't be deceived by demonic tricks from false teachers to enslave you by adding the Law or manmade rules to the gospel as requirements for salvation or Christian living. The Law has been fulfilled in Christ and we are free from its bondage. Do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with religious rules and traditions. These kinds of people pretend to be humble and claim they have had revelations of angels, or special prophecies that give them greater authority than the apostles themselves! They do this in order to entrap and seduce others into accepting their authority and influence. Their unspiritual minds are full of arrogant ideas, but they have no connection with Jesus Christ. True believers don't submit to worldly rules that forbid this or that. These rules are merely based on human commands and teachings. Such regulations might appear to be wise, but they cannot make anyone holy.

Some of these false teachers in the Church who oppose God's grace may not even be true Christians. A person's actions reveal whether one is truly a believer in Christ. If a person lives to please his flesh, it reveals the true state of his heart. Living by the flesh will only bring destruction. If a person lives to please the Spirit, he will reap eternal life from the Spirit. We were chosen in Christ for this, to be holy and blameless in His sight.

God, our Father, has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ for this very reason. He adopted us as His children in accordance with His pleasure and will. Our amazing God has given us this glorious grace through His Beloved Son, whose blood has redeemed us and through whom we have received forgiveness of sins. All this, because God has predestined us from eternity and desired to pour out His love on us lavishly by giving us a new nature, a new Master, and a new home.

WHERE IS HOME?

We have been saved by grace and are now alive with Christ because of God's

great love for us and because He is rich in mercy. He has raised us up with Christ and seated us with Him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus.

This is not just symbolic, but an actual spiritual reality.

Christ is now in heaven seated at the right hand of His Father, and because we are in Christ and one with Him, we are there too. It is impossible to be lifted any higher than this.

And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with Him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus. (Ephesians 2:6)

Ruling with Christ means...

WARRING AGAINST SIN AND UNRIGHTEOUSNESS

God saved us so that throughout the coming ages He might show the amazing riches of His grace, expressed in His kindness to us. That's what grace actually is - God's kindness.

We are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do, and these are faith works, not those arising out of human effort. We are now God's people and also members of His household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus Himself as the Chief Cornerstone. In Christ we are building blocks joined together as the holy temple in which God dwells by his Holy Spirit. There is one Body and one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. He gave apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers (as gifts) to equip His people in the Church for Kingdom service on earth. Expansion of the kingdom happens through the spread of the gospel but there are enemies of the gospel who seek to diminish what Christ has done for mankind. We must be strong in the mighty power of the Lord when facing them.

Our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, authorities, and powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. God has provided us with spiritual weaponry to battle them - heavenly armor that protects us when evil comes, enabling us to firmly stand our ground. [1] [SEP]

OUR SPIRITUAL ARMOUR

We have the **belt of truth** buckled around our waist. Jesus is "the way, the truth, and the life" so this symbol speaks of the protection Jesus' words give us in the

battle against the lies and deceptions of the enemy. Without understanding truth, we can be carried about by false doctrines and by the trickery of men.

We also have the **breastplate of righteousness**. This breastplate symbolizes the righteousness Jesus Christ has given us, making us new creations in Him. As Christians we have a new identity and a divine nature that is free from condemnation and guilt. This protects us from the accusations of the enemy who seeks to destroy us by making us afraid of God and unsure of His love. Knowing that we are perfect in Christ is essential to gain spiritual victory over sin and guilt.

Our **feet are to be shod with the gospel** of God's grace which symbolizes going out to reach the lost who have never heard of the salvation of Jesus Christ. Wherever we go, we are to have a ready answer for those who ask us the reason for the hope within us. The Lord wishes to add many more to His Kingdom through the preaching of the Good News.

The **shield of faith** extinguishes all the flaming arrows of the evil one, protecting our hearts as we rest on the promises of God. Our faith resists the tormenting doubts and fears that can attack the mind when facing difficult circumstances.

The helmet of salvation symbolizes the renewed mind which guards and protects our thought life and replaces false ideas and thoughts with the spiritual reality found in Jesus Christ. Understanding our salvation releases us into freedom. We are able to come to God with bold confidence in seeking answers to our prayers.

The **sword of the Spirit** is our offensive weapon with which we resist the enemy, cutting through his lies and turning aside his attacks. It symbolizes the Word of God, which has great authority to overcome any deception or oppression. With God's Word firmly anchored in our hearts, power is unleashed into our lives to overcome all obstacles.

We can also pray with power in the Spirit, knowing that He hears us and delights to answer our petitions.

Not only do we have the Holy Spirit to answer our prayers, but we have something else to aid us in spiritual battle. We have God's..

ANGELS

“See that you do not despise ^{one} of these little ones. For I tell you that in heaven

Thank You for previewing this eBook

You can read the full version of this eBook in different formats:

- HTML (Free /Available to everyone)
- PDF / TXT (Available to V.I.P. members. Free Standard members can access up to 5 PDF/TXT eBooks per month each month)
- Epub & Mobipocket (Exclusive to V.I.P. members)

To download this full book, simply select the format you desire below

