

The Grace of God



"For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us..." (Titus 2:11-12).

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Grace Out Of Focus

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"Grace In Focus" is a publication of the Grace Evangelical Society, whose editor is Robert Wilkin, Ph. D. In the November/December 2007 issue there is an article titled "Remember The Bereans (Acts 17:11)" by Mr. Wilkin attempts to express a "clearer" view of God's grace. In reality, Mr. Wilkin presents a clear picture of how he has rejected Grace and is helping others to lose focus as well.

Mr. Wilkin asserts that to be like the Bereans we must listen carefully to God's word, and be ready to change from traditions we have held to what God teaches. While this simple statement is true, Mr. Wilkin proceeds to give a personal illustration of how **he** is like the Bereans. Yet, his example actually proves that he is not like the Bereans. Bold emphasis is mine. I quote:

"From 1983-1985 I searched the Scriptures about the doctrine of repentance... When I finished my dissertation, I thought my understanding of repentance was settled.

Five years later, in 1990, Zane Hodges wrote a book called Absolutely Free! In it was a chapter in which he somewhat contradicted the findings in my dissertation...

*When I saw what Zane wrote, I was open but unconvinced. I couldn't find fault in the way he explained the Scriptures on this subject. But I still had trouble with a handful of passages, at the time, **I still thought the Greek word metanoia was a condition of everlasting life.***

My thought at the time was that if I could be convinced that those verses didn't teach that, then I would be convinced.

*It took about 7 years, but by 1997 **I was convinced that repentance isn't a condition of eternal life and that it isn't changing one's mind about Christ.***

That wasn't easy for me. It was seven years of thinking about certain texts, a little at a time. But it was necessary if I was to grow as a believer. If I clung to a position simply because it fit my tradition and it

seemed right to me, then I would never change my views." Two paragraphs later, Mr. Wilkin says: "If you cling doggedly to your tradition, you aren't a Berean."

Mr. Wilkin is wrong on several points. While human tradition should not be clung to doggedly, God's tradition **MUST** be clung to tenaciously: "So then, brethren, **stand fast, and hold the traditions** which ye were taught, whether by word, or by epistle of ours." (2 Thess. 2:15) I have no doubt Mr. Wilkin would say he agrees with this, but consider again the illustration he gave:

At one point he believed that repentance was a condition of eternal life. He reached this conclusion by studying the scriptures. Then, a well known and influential man wrote something contradicting this. This did not immediately sway Mr. Wilkin, but he admits to being "open" to persuasion. It took him seven years to change his mind (repent) and **turn away from the truth** on this item. Now he believes that repentance is **not** a condition of salvation. Imagine that. Why would a man be willing to change from what is revealed by God, to what man says? Why let go of Truth in order to create & hold doggedly to human traditions? After all, God has revealed more than a "handful of passages" that state it quite plainly:

Lu 5:32 "I am not come to call the righteous but sinners to **repentance.**"

Ac 2:38 "Then Peter said unto them, **Repent**, and be baptized **every one of you** in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

Ac 3:19 "**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;"

Ac 8:22 "**Repent** therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be **forgiven thee.**"

Ac 17:30 "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now **commandeth** all men every where to **repent.**"

Ac 26:19-20 "Wherefore, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision: but declared both to them of Damascus first and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the country of Judaea, and also to the Gentiles, that **they should repent** and turn to God, doing works worthy of repentance."

Ro 2:4-5 “Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God **leadeth thee to repentance?** but after **thy hardness and impenitent heart** treasurest up for thyself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God;”

2Co 7:10 “For godly sorrow worketh **repentance unto salvation**, a repentance which bringeth no regret: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.”

2Pe 3:9 “The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some count slackness; but is longsuffering to you-ward, not wishing that any should perish, but that **all should come to repentance.**”

Re 2:5 “Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and **repent**, and do the first works; **or else** I will come unto thee quickly, and **will remove thy candlestick** out of his place, **except thou repent.**”

Re 3:19 “As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and **repent.**”

Now these are just a few of the “handful of passages” Mr. Wilkin has evidently studied through the years. Has Mr. Wilkin found something that says **not** all need to repent? Or that God has actually **not** commanded it? Has he found something that says repentance is **not** connected with salvation, life, forgiveness - when many passages say that it **is** connected with these very things? Did Mr. Wilkin not see that an impenitent (unrepentant) heart” leads to wrath? Did he miss where Jesus said “repent... or else”? Does Mr. Wilkin think that the definition of the word “repent (*metanoia*) means something **other** than “to think differently... reconsider... repent”? Whatever the reason, Mr. Wilkin has repented of believing Truth, and turned to error. He has progressed in **unbelief** rather than belief of the Truth.

Most of you don't know Mr. Wilkin. Most of you have not seen his debates or read his articles through the years. But having seen some of that, and now this, it is all one and the same. Mr. Wilkin is systematically rejecting Truth in a variety of areas, and even in this very article says: “When we share the saving message with unbelievers, many simply reject what we say as out of hand because it doesn't match their tradition (Roman Catholic, Mormon, Church of Christ, etc.).” Thus, Mr. Wilkin lumps the Lord's church in with denominations and cults who blindly reject truth because of their traditions.

That is easy to assert, but Mr. Wilkin shoots himself in the foot in his own article. For by his own explanation, he describes his departure from what little Truth he use to hold on to (Mt. 13:12b). No wonder the “Church of Christ” rejects Mr. Wilkin “out of hand”.

God will judge Mr. Wilkin (and those like him) who reject Truth & blaspheme the blood bought body of Christ (2 Cor. 11:3-4, 13-15; Rom. 16:17-18; Gal. 1:6-9). Our point, though, is that **we** must beware of such men. Test the spirits, for many false teachers are in the world (1 John 4:1-6)!

PEOPLE TO REMEMBER & PRAY FOR

White family, Sawyer Sims, Jean Gambrell (back), **Johanna Fletcher, Othena Kinnard** (In Nashville), **Wesley Geer, Mag Bumbalough, Mary Cox, Monie Petty, Dave Poteet** (NHC 230), **Marilyn Poteet-Langford** (foot), **Betty England, Joe Smith, Thelma Klein, Nathan Hill, Ed Williams, Michelle Austin, Lydia Poe, Larry Bumbalough, Jake Hale, Joshua & Misty Poteet, Carolyn Williams, Kenley Streeval. Matthew Taylor** (leukemia), **Joyce Simmons Wagner, Lorene Myers** (Rece's Grandmother), **David Price** (David Price's father).

THINGS TO REMEMBER

- **Radio Program** - Every Sun. 2pm, AM 1050 WSMT
- **Home Bible Study** - Sat. Dec. 8 & 22
- **Ladies Class** - 2nd & Last Sunday Each Month
- **Business Meeting** - Sun. Dec. 30
- **GM** - Ron Daly, April 2008.
- **GM** - Lanny Smith, Oct.12-17, 2008.

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OBEY THE GOSPEL!!!

Hear (Rom. 10:17)

Believe (Mark 16:16)

Repent (Acts 17:30-31)

Confess (Rom. 10:9)

Be Baptized (Acts 2:38)

Live Faithfully (Rev. 2:10)