

# DESTINY BULLETIN

A commentary sent to the supporters of the ministry of Christian Destiny.

Dear “Special Friend” of Christian Destiny,

December 2003

## “TREASURES OF GRACE”

Think for just a moment concerning what God tells us about the special ways in which grace specifically and continually produces riches in the life of the person who believes in Jesus Christ.

**1. GRACE IS THE KEY TO ALL SUFFICIENCY (II Cor. 9:8).** We have serious but naive Christians who continue to preach and teach that God blesses us because we are faithful, because we are worthy, because of our merit. The truth, however, lies in the fact that God blesses us because of the faithfulness, merit and worthiness of Jesus Christ on Calvary’s cross. So the Apostle Paul was able to say, “*By the grace of God I am what I am*” (I Cor. 15:10). This man of God announced that at all times and in all places he was the undeserving object of sufficient grace. He rejoiced, whatever his circumstances, in the presence, power and never failing riches of Jesus Christ. For the Christian, every need is supplied (Phil. 4:19).

When we believe this, we will never again be subject to the indignation and bitterness which comes from a merely human interpretation of our circumstances. With the help of the professional agitators in today’s world, many walk and live their lives in a state of inflamed resentment at someone who is more favored or apparently (and so much is only apparent) more rich than they. Until recently, this attitude was called by its right name—envy. Now it is “the legitimate thirst for liberation” but it is, in fact, a satanic trick to divert our attention from the sufficiency of divine grace. Our pathetic and ignorant world needs to discover that the heart of man will never be satisfied with human possessions.

What a contrast to all of this in the life of the Christian. The one who has believed in Jesus Christ has been delivered from the idiotic pursuit of perishable human gain as the purpose of life in that he knows himself to be a sinner, forgiven by Christ and one who is now the object of gracious provision from heaven. Clearly, virtually every indignation in our present world would be dissolved with the proper understanding of grace, the unmerited favor of God which comes to those who believe.

**2. GRACE GIVES DIRECTION TO LIFE.** The believer, rejoicing in salvation, soon asks, “What now shall I do?” The Apostle Peter calls him to follow the method by which his strength and spiritual capacity are increased: “*But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be glory both now and for ever*” (II Peter 3:18).

It must once again be said that certainly the greatest need in the Church of our time is for this exact process--growth in grace and in the knowledge of Christ--to take place. The individual believer in these days and the Church as well, have given themselves to a myriad of programs, many of which may indeed be commendable, albeit increasingly costly. The shortcoming of many of these activities, however, is that they so easily obscure this clear call to each person who has trusted the Savior to grow in grace and to continue to expand his knowledge of Jesus Christ.

To grow in grace means to grow in an understanding of, appreciation of, response to, gratefulness for, witness concerning the marvelous grace of God. Growth in grace must be the object of the ministry of the Church and the goal of every Christian.

How then shall we grow in grace? A great appreciation of sustaining grace comes when we come, as the Bible tells us, to remind ourselves of “*the things that are freely given to us of God*” (I Cor. 2:12).

All bitterness and resentment would quickly be dispelled within any person who would take an hour to meditate upon the things which have come to him gratuitously from his Heavenly Father on a daily basis. Surely these include life itself, health, strength, the absence of pain (and sometimes its needed presence), food, shelter, friends, critics, and many other things.

**3. GRACE PRODUCES AN ESTABLISHED, STRONG HEART.** The timorous spirit of man is made strong and courageous, confident for every one of the experiences of life, when it rests upon the sense of a daily provision of favor from God. No matter what be a man's circumstances, no matter how violent may be the waves which come crashing against his life in the world in which he lives and moves, he resigns himself to divine grace and the result is beautiful indeed.

Resignation to the will of God and confidence that God, because of His grace, will always deal with us with benefit and blessing—this attitude will stabilize the trembling heart in a world like this. Who can doubt that our continually aggravating “social problems” would simply evaporate before a proper understanding of divine grace which is available to all in our present world.

**4. GRACE GUARANTEES READY ACCESS TO GOD HIMSELF.** No one who has lived a few years on this troubled planet would suggest that our present world--this life--is not full of needs, pressures, temptations, failures and frustrations on the part of those who are Christians. We have the promise of continued, abundant grace for every need and regular access to the presence and certain help of a God who continues to deal with us by grace. God understands the concerns of our human life in every detail. This indeed is one of our great benefits from Jesus Christ having become a man like we are. We read, therefore, with appreciation the marvelous promise, *“Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need”* (Heb. 4:14-16).

**5. GRACE SUPPLIES ABILITY FOR DIVINE SERVICE.** In addition to the infinitely precious gift of salvation, each believer is invited by his Lord to invest his life to accomplish heaven's results in this world. Lost, sinful man, redeemed by the grace of God, is now given the dignity of causality—the privilege of serving the great King.

Few people realize that the opportunity to serve on behalf of others is a very precious gift indeed. The man who has not yet come to Jesus Christ, among his many other problems, still has within himself a killing vice—selfishness. He does nothing in life except with the question in mind, “What will I get out of this? How will this work out to my profit?” He spends his life looking out for number one, and for him that moment is lost which does not produce advantage over someone else, fair or unfair. His mind, the opposite of the mind of Christ, is selfish and will ultimately be satanic. The person whose own well-being is the final motivation of life is in desperate, hopeless poverty.

Conversely, one of the classic proofs of the living presence of Jesus Christ in a life is that that life no longer seeks its own profit, its own advantage. Rather, that life is lived in service to God, seeking the benefit of others. All agree, even the worst of us in our better moments, that life in pursuit of personal advantage is ultimately wasted. There's no doubt that this life is made a joyous and wonderful thing because of the grace of God. The Christian has been delivered from the poverty of selfishness.

**6. GRACE IS EVERLASTING, REACHING OUT INTO ETERNITY.** We all recognize that this life at its best is not final reality. It is rather the pleasing, anxious prelude to the real life which is before us in heaven. As wonderful as our sojourn on earth may have been, there comes a time when each of us is called to move across that fog-shrouded bridge from this fading world to the real world to come. At this time, the time of our physical death, even the Christian is tempted to be disconsolate. Faith itself may seem to fail. It is then that the Christian remembers that this wealth of grace which is his in Jesus Christ is the basis of his hope of heaven.

No one but a fool would esteem anything of value that is not characterized by “*everlasting consolation and good hope.*” To possess these eternal satisfactions is to be rich indeed. To be without that is to be in the most grinding of all poverty. How then do these eternal realities become ours? The answer—“through grace.” Grace assures us of our home in heaven. In that bright land the streets are paved with gold—gold that will never perish.

### **THE RICH AND THE POOR**

What then is the wealth by which we live? As we have seen, it cannot be the coin of any realm or the currency of any nation. Rather it must be the wealth of divine favor, the wealth that is grace itself. No person who receives the grace of Jesus Christ can ever be poor, and no person who is without that grace can ever be rich.

Let us remember, then, that the grace of Jesus Christ comes to us first of all in salvation, by which grace we are freely given the gift of God which is life everlasting. Apart from this saving grace we cannot live, for it is the basis of everlasting life and of our temporal existence as well.

The grace of God, where alone is wealth, continues to be operative on our behalf in every hour and every activity of our lives as children of God. All that we have is freely given to us by a gracious Heavenly Father because of Christ. The Christian alone is therefore the possessor of true riches and eternal hope. All others, however ornate may be the palace of their temporal existence, are impoverished and hopeless--lost for eternity.

### **A PERSONAL INVITATION**

We invite every eye that looks upon these pages to look up at this moment into the face of the loving Heavenly Father. You are invited to make this the day in which you receive the grace of God which is available because of the saving work of Jesus Christ for you on Calvary’s cross. Please believe that there is nothing to pay, nothing to promise, there is only to receive the gift of God which is life eternal. Salvation is by grace.

This reception of the Son of God, this decision to receive Christ will produce access to the riches of heaven which a loving Father will begin to pour out upon you in abundance. It is a golden stream which will never fail for all of time and into the wideness of eternity.

## **CHRISTMAS AND THE FUTURE**

In our time and nation, long conditioned by the salutary influence of historic Christianity, we may forget what that very first Christmas meant to the world. It was the dawn of hope after a long and dark night of Divine silence.

When the wise men saw the star on that glorious evening, that light was the first to shine from heaven in 400 long years. Malachi had closed his revelation (with the word “curse”) and God had spoken not a word since. Generations had come and gone, armies had swept across the land, dynasties had risen and faded—but God had said nothing! This revelationless era, the intertestament period, is now known as “the 400 silent years.”

People therefore were asking, “Is God still there?” “Does He love Us?” “Where is He anyway?” The revelation of the Old Testament was fast dropping into antiquity. For the people who lived 2,000 years ago, the past was fading and the future was clouded indeed. “Maybe God has forgotten us,” they said to themselves and we can certainly understand their near-despair. Scoffers abounded and faith seemed to fail for many.

Then came the star shining in the east! The Babe of Bethlehem shattered the hopelessness of earth with His humble but noble birth in the stable in the City of David. Emmanuel is here – God is with us. The birth of Jesus Christ demonstrates forever that God has not forgotten us, but He has chosen rather to be involved with us in the most intimate and personal way – God has become human.

The coming of Jesus Christ on that first Christmas morning meant many things. One of the best of these things is the fact that in Bethlehem there was the dawn of hope. For the first time it was possible for man to talk about something called “the future” and live a life that was in any way characterized by “happy anticipation.” The life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ means that man is not here to stagnate in an impossible present. Rather, he is here to move into a future increasingly characterized by bright possibilities and glorious destinations. The Lord Jesus has “*brought life and immortality to light through the gospel*” and given us a hope that is sure and steadfast, that reaches into the wideness of eternity. For the world of that day and for every generation since, the coming of Jesus Christ was and is the dawn of hope. He is the One who gives the future a meaning other than dark apprehension.

The message that Jesus Christ in His coming is the dawn of hope must be heard again by our present age. We live in a time in which human optimism is expiring on every hand, giving way to what our world calls “existential despair.” Our present world is torn by revolution, terrorized by political and religious radicals, frightened by rising crime, fearful of financial collapse, apprehensive of global war and speaking as if nuclear holocaust is inevitable. It appears as if the ring of darkness is closing around the remaining lights of Christian civilization as nation after nation falls into rebellion and ruin. A horizontal examination of the human scene brings little cause for encouragement. Hope is not forthcoming on the human scene.

But look up! See again. . . the star of Bethlehem still shines! The truth that God has become one of us in the Lord Jesus is still the great fact in history. He has joined Himself with our humanity in order that we might have the hope of eternal life. God is with us both today and in the future--this is the message that must come to every heart again this Christmas season.

Yes indeed, it's Christmas again! The Star of Bethlehem still shines--now and forever!

From the writings of Dave Breese.

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**“CHRISTMAS IS SPECIAL”**

by Tim LaHaye



During the 15 years that Dave served as speaker on *The King Is Coming* telecast and President of *World Prophetic Ministry*, he provided answers to hundreds of biblical questions...answers that were printed in a publication called *The Bible Says*. This insert will be included in the *Destiny Bulletin* which is sent to our supporters.

We thought you might enjoy Dave's answers to frequently asked questions, along with the answers of Dr. Ed Hindson and others. We have extra copies here at the office if you want them.

Carol Breese