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The Disappearance of Grace Believers

When you look at ancient Israel and the United States of America, you will see that they sprung forth out of poverty or slavery, that there were times of judgment and chastisement, that the people turned their hearts to the Lord and his Word, that over the years they became prosperous, then they began to forget the Lord.

Pride, carnality, worldliness, idolatry, hedonism, materialism, lust gratification, human good, self righteousness, debauchery, moral and immoral degeneracy, came into the picture as the people of God turned away from the Word of God. We are seeing it today as David saw it in his day and wrote about it in Psalm 12.

A. *“Help, LORD; for the godly man ceaseth; for the faithful fail from among the children of men.”* - הוֹשִׁיעָה יְהוָה כִּי־גַמַר חַסִיד כִּי־פָסוּ אַמוּנִים מִבְּנֵי אָדָם: Psalm 12:1

1. *"Help Lord"*- הוֹשִׁיעָה יְהוָה

David's prayer is addressed directly to God calling him by his personal name, *Yahweh*, and he is asking him for help. He doesn't specifically state how he wants God to help him, but to help him in a manner that only God himself can do. As we have seen in our study on healing and health, the name of the Lord, Jesus, is derived from the Hebrew, *Yah Shua*, which meant *Yah* our Healer, or *Yah* our Helper, or *Yah* our Deliverer. And here he is asking *Yahweh* for help, the kind of help that only *Yahweh* our Lord and God can give him. And we can expect help from God because he is our covenant helper.

One might ask, why is that so important? So the doctrinal believers in one's nation are diminishing, what's that to David, he's still alive! The difference is regarding the negative impact that this will have on the laws, culture and morals of the people living there. Sin nature activity will abound, worldliness will consume the people living there, demonism will flood the land, and eventually God will step in to judge and ultimately destroy. Not to mention the negative impact that it will have on David's soul and other believers living there; the torment he will face, as did Lot, as he is surrounded by ungodly people! So you can see why he is praying for God to step in and help with only the kind of help that he could give, and we should be praying the same thing too!

2. *"For the godly man ceaseth"*- כִּי־גַמַר חַסִיד

The word for "godly man" is *chaside*, the masculine singular of *chesed*, the word for grace. *Chesed* is the word for grace, and ***chaside* is the believer who practices and lives by grace!** There's a big difference between the two. All believers in Christ are saved by grace, but not all believers in Christ understand, live by and practice grace in their

dealings with other people. Some Christians are grace believers, most aren't.

The grace of God is his unfailing love toward us, and in all that he does for us; it is done not because we have earned it, or deserved it, or merited it, but that it is done as a favor for us; it is a gift from him to us. One must always keep in mind also that the grace of God rejects the works and morality of man.

The grace of God rejects the works of man; one must always keep this in mind, if he is to understand what it means to live by grace. *"And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work."* Romans 11:6

God has determined in his righteousness, justice and grace how we are to enter into a right relationship with him, how we are to worship him, how we are to please him, how we are to serve him and how we are to appropriate all his blessings which come through his grace. In doing so he has completely rejected and excluded all of man's ideas, man's works and man's self righteous morality. **Grace excludes works and man's works exclude God's grace; the two are mutually exclusive.**

The grace believer is one who understands this and lives by this principle in their lives. They know that they are saved by God's grace, through faith in Jesus Christ, and that there is absolutely nothing that they did, or could do to be saved. They know that God brought them to Christ for salvation, and that God even supplied them the faith to believe on Christ!

They know that whatever blessings that they receive from God are received by, not what they have done, but out of God's unfailing love. They know that they do not deserve anything from God, but that he gives them grace because of his wonderful character. They know that God gives them blessings **in spite of** who they are and what they have done!

They also understand that grace is given to them and that it is appropriated by the dynamic of faith. Living by faith, walking by faith, trust in the Father, and faith in the teaching of Bible Doctrine is how the grace believer lives their life.

The grace believer is also a doctrinal believer, in that they live for the teaching of the Word of God. Bible Doctrine is their number one priority in life. But not so for the works oriented believer. In their heart they live by the principle of "by my own works I have done this" and doctrine is not their priority.

As grace believers they are also gracious to other people. In their dealings with other people they do not demand the letter of the law. They have a laid back "live and let live" attitude. They know that they do not deserve all that God has done for them and they try to pass that same philosophy on in their dealings with other people.

The grace believer deals with others in grace; he is kind to them, patient, gentle, compassionate, understanding and loving. He is positive to the Word of God, he does not vaunt himself, he doesn't brag about who he is, what he has and what he has done, and

has as the foundation of his life grace, faith and truth.

So this is the believer David was talking about. They existed in David's day and they exist today. But there was a problem! **What happened to them? Where did they go?** He looked around and didn't see them like he used to; they had disappeared and the wrong types were taking over the scene in the country.

The word *gamar* meant to dwindle, to leave off, to cease, to diminish, to disappear from the scene. Their numbers were dwindling. Now they might have died off due to old age; they may have moved away, or they may have ceased to be and join the ranks of the worldly believers in Israel. We don't know why they were disappearing, (apostasy is usually the number one culprit), all we know is that they were disappearing from the contemporary scene in Israel, under David, like in America today.

Charles Spurgeon wrote about the “*Great Controversy*” in England in his day when Arminism was trying to take over the churches to replace Calvinism. This is an in depth subject too large to deal with in this study, but it really was an attack of works on grace.

Basically it centered around free will versus total depravity, and common faith versus efficacious faith. Arminism taught that man could choose to come to God if he would so will. While the Word shows that man, in his total depravity, cannot and will not come to Christ. If he does come to Christ; it's because God brings him to him.

In the area of faith, Arminism taught that all men had the faith necessary to be saved. While in the Word it shows that although man does possess faith for all sorts of things, he does not inherently possess the faith necessary for salvation, and that it, also, is a gift from God that comes from God through his Word. “*So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*” Romans 10:17

And from the Word Spurgeon showed how these two concepts, and others, appealed to man's pride and pride of works, and that in time the doctrines of grace, as a whole, would be ignored as man went about in his own works. **If salvation is all of grace, then all of man's works are excluded, that is, anything and everything that a man is capable of doing or producing is excluded.**

3. “*For the faithful fail from among the children of men.*”- כִּי־פָסוּ אֲמוּנִים מִבְּנֵי אָדָם:

Pasas is to leave off, to disappear, to vanish, to disappear from the scene. It doesn't tell us specifically what happened to them, whether they had died, or moved away, or were keeping their heads down. Only that at one time, and perhaps for a very long time, David was aware that there were grace believers in his country and near vicinity, then there came a point in time that they had disappeared from the scene!

Psalms 11, 12 and 13 should be taken together and when we go back to Psalm 11 we see that the upright believers in Israel were being attacked by the wicked, even David apparently was threatened. “*For, lo, the wicked bend their bow, they make ready their arrow upon the string, that they may privily shoot at the upright in heart.*” Psalm 11:2

It was imperative to David that he stay in power as the king over Israel to protect the grace believers from the attack of the wicked, the legalists, the self-righteous, the violent. He knew that if the foundations of government were destroyed, who would be there to protect them! *“For, lo, the wicked bend their bow, they make ready their arrow upon the string, that they may privily shoot at the upright in heart.”* Psalm 11:3

What happened to the grace believer in those days? We don't know. We could ask the same thing today. What happened to the grace believer? Certainly some died off over a period of time due to old age. Others died by assassination. Some may have disappeared into the countryside, or into rural areas, and still others may have had to flee the country to avoid persecution from people and/or the government. Christians living in the first century in Jerusalem were forced more than once to leave the city and eventually the nation due to persecution.

And then there were those who in time became negative to the Word of God and grace living and joined the apostasy. Maybe they too got infected with the spirit of the world system and all that it promised: money, success, homes, clothes, etc..

It wasn't a steadfast rule, but there was a general principle understood by those living in those days that **the righteous, the grace believer, the faithful believer tended to live out in the countryside in small areas far away from the large cities, including Jerusalem, because all that went with living in a city.** Money, success, materialism, social position, sophistication, clamoring for power, carnality and worldiness were just some of the things to be found in the city. While in the countryside, the rural areas and small towns have generally been the backbone of God, country and family.

From Abraham, who lived in the countryside, and Lot, who lived in the city of Sodom, through the prophets and the godly men and women of the Old testament, you will find that the **doctrinal believers tended to live in the countryside or rural areas, rather than live in a city, and it really had to do with their spiritual life!** They knew that it was extremely difficult to maintain their fellowship and walk with God and concentrate on Bible Doctrine because of the distractions of city living. They knew that in the cities there were too many allurements for them and their children. **They also knew that the cities were magnets for the wicked!**

But you say, what about God's city Jerusalem? It's true that God did establish Jerusalem for himself and his presence. But it was a city, and as a city it became a seat for power, money and position as well. And as such, it became a magnet for all the wicked to move there so they could gain power, material possessions and money! And over a period of time they gained power in Jerusalem, and then for whatever reasons, the grace believers were no longer to be found!

The wicked have always gravitated toward cities because there they can find money, job security, the gratification of their lusts, worldly ambition, power and every other thing that their old sin natures lust after.

B. "They speak vanity every one with his neighbour: with flattering lips and with a double heart do they speak." - שוא ידברו איש את־רעהו שפת חלקות בלב ולב - Psalm 12:2 ידברו:

1. "Everyone lies to one another" - שוא ידברו איש את־רעהו

The word for *lies* or *vanity* is *shav* or *shava* and it can and does refer to lies, but it has as its basic idea the concept of emptiness or nothingness, so it encompasses everything from outright lies, to deception, to the substance of conversation void of any meaningful content. "*Lies*" is too restricting; it includes that, but is not limited to it.

To *speak, dabhar*, is the action of the mouth as one forms words. One forms words based upon the content of one's soul. **If there is something in the soul**, then their words will have substance and content. **If there is nothing in the soul**, then the words that they speak will reflect that by speaking empty words, words void of any meaningful content.

When a believer in Christ is sitting under the teaching of the Word of God, and metabolizing it by faith, then their souls will become storehouses of divine viewpoint. This divine viewpoint (DVP) will be reflected in their speech and the content of their speech will not only be truth, reflecting the truth they have in their souls, but it will also be full of meaningful content.

But if they have rejected Bible Doctrine, then their souls will be empty of anything meaningful and their conversations will reflect that. Whatever they do so will be centered around: lies, deception, bragging about themselves, vaunting themselves, putting other people down, or about things in life that are utterly boring and meaningless. They "mouth" meaningless words because of the lack of meaningful content in their souls. They "mouth" flattering words to mask the deception of their hearts.

David is describing the condition of God's people in his day, and it was one of a spiraling apostasy. The believers living then had rejected Bible Doctrine and the situation had got to the place that he couldn't find any grace oriented believers; they had disappeared. He tells us what it was like manifested in their conversations to each other. He tells us what he heard from those around him in those days. In essence he's saying, **"Where's the grace believers who love Bible Doctrine? All I hear and see are religious hypocrites whose mouths run off with meaningless jibberish!"**

To understand what was going on culturally then, all one has to do is look around and listen to what people are talking about in America today! What we hear people talking about today is how much money they make, their degrees from school, the houses they have, the cars they drive, what their kids are doing, how important they are, the places they have been to, the things they own, their accomplishments in life, their big plans for their lives, all the "great" things **they** are doing in their churches, or topics that are so boring that one wants to do is run away!

And that doesn't even bring in the idea of their deceitfulness of speech. Usually they have a hidden agenda; they say what they want to say because they have an ulterior motive behind it. And it's usually so they can gain power, or money, or a higher position in society. And then there are the outright lies. Some people are like Satan because lying is their native tongue.

2. *"With flattering lips and with a double heart do they speak."* - "שפת חלקות בלב ולב ידברו:"

With *flattering lips* is with smooth lips, slippery lips, slippery speech, and flattery is certainly a part of it. It's not eloquence of speech, but to be able to say the right words that one can sway another person. It refers to people who are good at buttering people up, who know the right words to say to convince you, to get you on their side. And without Bible Doctrine metabolized in the soul this is what you end up with in people. We've all met these types who are **able to say the right things in the right way** and get past our defences to accept their point of view.

These are not the type of people who will give you the truth, even though it may make you mad at them, but who are able to say the right things in the right way to win you over. Politicians are masters at this. Rarely do they ever speak the truth to you; truth, to them, is a malleable commodity used to win you over, to get your vote.

Most ministers in the pulpits today are also experts at this, with their good looks, winning ways, personal charm and sweet talking they gain converts to their ministries by saying what they know people want to hear. Rarely do they center their pulpit ministries around the truth of God's Word and nothing but the truth, regardless of whose feet they step on. Their goals are to build up the numbers and money of their ministries and this kind of communication is how they do this.

Satan is a master at this and it was the tactic he used in the garden. Every church break up, every church split, every believer who has been influenced away from a doctrinal church had someone who used "flattering lips" to get through to the believer to get them to leave. These are they types that cause divisions in churches. They are negative to doctrine and they work on other believers, through smooth speech, to get them away from the Word also. They are "silver tongued", as we would say, too slippery to pin down.

"And with a double heart" is *heart heart*. Two hearts is another way of saying that the individual has an ulterior motive, an hidden agenda. It's saying that behind the facade of the nice words they are saying to you, that they have an ulterior motive in doing so.

They may act like they're your friend, they may act like they care for you, they may act like they're concerned for the ministry, they may act like they love the Lord, and they may be able to fool us by the right sounding words and phony love and sincerity they use to convince us, but behind all their phony words is a deceitful heart!

C. *"The LORD shall cut off all flattering lips, and the tongue that speaketh*

proud things:"- יכרת יהוה כל-שפתי חלקות לשון מדברת גדלות: Psalm 12:3

David is now expressing what he wants Yahweh to do. It may sound harsh by people's standards today, but he wants God to judge this type of wicked believer and shut them up. To David it was a matter of principle. He loved the Word of God; he loved Bible Doctrine; he loved truth; he loved God's grace and he hated falsehood..

David was probably exposed to more of this than the average man, because as the king over Israel he would be surrounded by those who were gravitating to the seat of power, money, fame and prestige in the nation. He probably had his fill of the nondoctrinal types, the "yes men", those who used flattery to get what they wanted.

But he saw right through them. Why? Because he was himself a grace believer who was doctrinally oriented to truth. Bible Doctrine metabolized in his soul gave him the wisdom to see through the meaningless words he was constantly exposed to. He saw through the facade of flattery, through their nice words spoken in so nice a way. And he saw through their deceit and their hidden agendas.

And you could be sure that he had had his fill of the boring, meaningless conversations that he had to endure from a never ending stream of people seeking audience with him. Mind-numbing conversations that had absolutely no doctrinal content in them whatsoever, no substance, nothing that a man of capacity and content would want to listen to, but ones that he had to endure as the king. And above all that was the flattery and the boastful talking of the arrogant. What did David think of them? He prayed that God would judge them and get rid of them.

How many Christians over the years have said, "Oh how I would like to have met David!" Such typical talk for the arrogant. What makes you think that he would have wanted to meet you? Do you have doctrinal character and integrity? Do you have grace oriented humility? Do you love Bible Doctrine more than anything on earth? Do you love truth and hate evil? Are you sitting under the doctrinal teaching of God's Word and applying it to your life? Have you separated yourself from the wicked and those negative to the Word? No? Then what makes you think that David would want to talk to you? You're the type of person that David couldn't stand!

D. *"Who have said, With our tongue will we prevail; our lips are our own: who is lord over us?"- אשר אמרו ללשננו נגביר שפתינו אתנו מי אדון לנו: Psalm 12:4*

What we have is a case of pride pure and simple. Lifted up in their thinking they have put themselves above the Word, above God and above authority. *"Who is lord over us?"*, they say. The word *adonay* denoted the idea of one being in authority over you, so what they're saying is that they're not under anyone's authority. Which happens to be one of the biggest problems in America today; even most Christians have an authority problem.

No one is going to tell them what to do; and no one is going to tell them what to say. This is the tongue of arrogance and the heart of pride. Triumphant with their tongues tells us that they are skilled at the art of the argument. You can't pin them down; they are slippery and evasive; and words to them are nothing more than the means to an end.

David was deeply distressed because of the deteriorating spiritual condition of his day, as many believers in America are today. We see a lot of hoopla today, much religiosity going on in the churches, stage productions, entertainment, programs of all sorts, but where is the teaching of Bible doctrine? David was bothered by the spiritual principle of it, and he was bothered because of the negative impact that it would have on his nation and the rest of the people living in it.

We see a lot of "works", a lot of so called "Christian" activity going on today, but where is the grace? Where is the teaching on grace? Where are the grace believers? Most Christians today don't even know what grace is! They couldn't give you a single paragraph of definition on it. Why? Because the pulpits aren't teaching about it?

Get'em saved; get'em baptized; get'em into the church and tithing, keep them busy and off the street and that's about it. But where's the doctrine? To be a grace believer you have to be taught constantly about grace and you have to be taught the doctrines of God's Word.

The format for the churches today, if you can call it that, is to teach Bible Doctrine to the people of God. But most churches reject that concept and come up with their own ideas. Excuse me! I don't remember anywhere in the Bible where God asked our opinion, advice, or suggestions on how he wants his churches run! He tells us what he wants done and that's to feed his flock!

So remember, the *godly man* here refers to the believer in Christ who practices grace to other people. We would call him a **grace-oriented believer**. He is also referred to as the *faithful*, which as we have seen, means that they are men and women of the Word. Men and women who are under the teaching of the Word of God and apply it to life. We call them **doctrinal believers**. They are one and the same.

If a believer in Christ is not sitting under the simple teaching of the Word of God, if a believer is not under the authority of a Pastor-Teacher, if a believer is not being taught about God's grace and growing in grace, but is involved in legalism, programism, entertainmentism and the rest of the things found in so many "works" oriented churches we see today, then they are not grace believers.

Just being saved by grace doesn't mean that one is a grace believer. To be a grace believer one must be a doctrinal believer who lives by and applies the doctrines to their life. And especially in view here, the doctrines of grace. When grace believers start to disappear off the scene; it's not only a sign of apostasy, but a warning for those who are left to stay closer to the Word of God.

Pastor Mike

