

# Our Hope-God's Grace-Our Probation

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“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God and not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die”.  
(*Roman 5:1-7*)

But there is no man that is good! In Matthew 19:17 and Mark 10:18 Jesus made it very clear that no one except God was good. Evidently anywhere “Good” is found it belongs to God and originated with him. “For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not.” Eccl. 7:20. “But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.” Romans 5:8, 10.

Why are we evil, no “good” and why is it necessary for someone to die and then live for us? In order to answer these questions, we need to go back and examine what happen shortly after creation when sin entered the world.

In the account given in the book of Genesis chapter 3, we read in verses 2, 3 and 6: **“And the woman said unto the serpent, we may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die...”** **“And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.”** Here we find the very first act of transgression by mankind and yet the only one needed to plunge him into death. “...for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” (*Chapter 2:17 last part*) This is when the goodness of God in man departed from him. Now note what happened to Adam and Eve the moment they disobeyed God! They ran away from God; they hid themselves amongst the trees in the garden (*Chapter 3:8*). Now they are afraid; their nature has changed; they are now seeing themselves as being naked. They lost something instantly and they felt the nakedness.

So then, sin came into the world through one man and death came as a result of sin and death is passed on to all men because all men have sinned. See *Romans 5:12-14*. Before the law came to man (at Sinai), that is before it was written on tables of stone, there was sin in the world; but sin was not imputed (ascribed or charged to) before then. In spite of the fact that it was not imputed, death still reigned in that period, even on all that did not sin in the same manner as Adam sinned by breaking the commandment given him in the garden. So through the offence of one man many died... (*See verse 15*).

“For all have sinned”. Sin here is a verb used in the past tense; it is an action word not a noun. Which suggest something you do. However, though it is in the past tense, it bears a classification for “all men”; “for all have sinned”. This **“all”** entails everyone born of Adam, both past, present and future and has a prophetic element or value, in the same way as Christ died for **“all”**, inclusive of the present, those in the past as well as for those to be born in the future.

He died for “**all**”. In this sense “all have sinned” includes those of the past, the present and the future. The most striking evidence of this is that death is passed on to all mankind and death came as a result of sin. What we have here is cause and effect. We have sin and it caused death so without sin there would be no death! And since we have death there must be sin.

But what is it in Adam that he has passed on to all, which caused all mankind to die? It must evidently be something which causes all mankind to sin because death comes as a result of sin. “...death spread to all men because of sin” (*Rom 5:12 last part NKJV*)

So then since sin entered the world through Adam and death is passed on to all men from Adam, what is it that Adam has passed onto all mankind? The first thing which might come to your mind is that Adam passed on his life to all. Good thinking! It is so because mankind is just an extension of Adam. Even Eve was an extension of Adam. (*See Gen 2:21-23*) We were in the loins of Adam when he sinned; in the same sense as Levi paid tithes while he was in the loins of Abraham. (*And as I may so say, Levi also, who receiveth tithes, payed tithes in Abraham; for he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchisedec met him Heb 7: 9, 10*). So whatever happened to Adam when he sinned happened to us too, for we were in him; a part of him when he sinned, and today we are extensions of him with the extensions of death and sin.

When Adam sinned, he died. A sentence of death was upon him; he was instantly put on death row. All this happened before he had any children. Our parents were already dead before they begot us. Adam was dead when he begat Cain. We were born of dead people; what does that make us? But wait! What did the scripture says that cause death? Sin! Look at the works of Cain! Therefore the answer to the question: what did Adam passed onto us, which made us all sin, and all condemned, and which will make all of us die, save the intervention of God is becoming more evident; but what is it called?

Maybe the apostle Paul had the same problem I and many of us have, in finding a single word to name this thing. So in Romans chapter 7 he called this thing after its action, the verb; he called it “Sin”. He called it a name after its character. This is not unusual, even though it is not as popular today, but people of old named people, places, and things after their character or some occurrences which may be associated with the subject. For example: the word to whore is a verb but the one which do the act is called a Whore. Likewise a Drunk is so called (colloquially) because he is almost always drunk. The word Murah means bitter and so the place was called Murah. Confusing the subject “Sin” with its verb ‘sin’ has caused much disagreement and stirrings amongst Bible Scholars in our circles in recent times. Many hold dare to the definition of 1John 3:4 “...sin is the transgression of the law”. I have no difficulty with that. We don’t need to get hang up on semantics; there is no conflict here: only a misunderstanding of nominal context and grammar. Sin as a verb, is the transgression of the law and there is no better definition for sin, as a verb, in the bible. But the thing which causes all to sin, which the apostle Paul called “Sin”, exist in **all**, even in the absence of the knowledge of the law and even in those who are ignorant of the law, even in those who existed before the giving of the written law.

“Well sin is personified here” some have said.

But Jesus came to save the world from Sin. The text did not say sins, but Sin. **“The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.. (John 1:29)**. Well, should I think here that everyone that makes up the world has a thing called SIN which Jesus Christ came to take away? The answer seems to be a straightforward yes. Jesus did not come to take away the transgressions of the law (sins), He came to take away the thing which cause us to transgress the law; SIN. He came to remove the cause rather than the effects. He went straight to the source of the problem. So when the apostle Paul referred to: been sold under SIN, SIN that dwells in him, and let not SIN have dominion

over you to obey its lust, he was referring to the same SIN which Jesus Christ came to take away!

In this thing called "SIN", is the seed of death. This seed is found in every child of Adam. Some people might prefer to call this thing the: propensities of sin, the nature of sin or the carnal nature. All these phrases and definitions are fine, but the apostle Paul, under inspiration, had chosen to call it by one word: SIN. (*See Rom. 7:9, 11, 14, 17-23*)

At this stage, excluding what God has done for us, we are all on death row, condemned, under the sentence of death. John chapter 3: 18 reads: "He that believeth on him is not condemned: **but he that believeth not is condemned already**, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." This clearly means that, before Jesus came into the picture so that men may believe in him, were all condemned!

Death rules equally with SIN. In Romans chapter 5 comparing verse 14 with verse 21, we see that in verse 14, death reigned... and in verse 21, SIN reigned in death..., for Adam has passed on the seed of death which is called SIN but Jesus Christ has brought the seed of life which is Righteousness. "For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of **righteousness** shall reign in **life** by one, **Jesus Christ.**" (*Rom 5:17*).

(1Cor.15:45.) We receive the seed of death from Adam first through conception then birth, but to receive the seed of life everlasting we must first be conceived in faith then the spiritual rebirth. "And so it is written, the first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit." (*1Cor.15:45*).

The concept of some modern day Christians, who believe that they can get to heaven while living a lie in SIN, fades away in the light of the understanding of this message. How can righteousness dwells where there is SIN? To believe this would equally mean that death exist where there is life. This is just as impossible as to have darkness where there is light. In Jesus Christ was life; and the life was the light of men. Light is a substance; darkness is the absence of it. Life is substance and death is the absence of it. So then if SIN causes death and Righteousness brings Life; how can they dwell together? 1John 3:9 tell us that he who is born of God does not sin because His seed remains in him. It is either one or the other.

In the same sense as sin is an act which is a result of something in mankind which is also called SIN, so it is doing rightly, an act which is a result of something in Jesus Christ which is Righteousness. The difference is what we inherit from Adam our father as opposed to what Jesus inherits from his Father. We inherit death; he inherits life. If he imparts the same life he gets from his Father to us then we will be saved from death. This life which is the life of God is the Holy Spirit and He the Father has chosen His Son to be the channel, the one through whom this life may be accessed. Just as in the beginning he chose him to create the world; so He has chosen him to redeem the world. If we believe that He (God) exists and that He created the worlds through His Son Jesus, then it requires no more faith to believe that He has chosen this same Jesus to give us His eternal life. Yes! Praise the Lord! The only prerequisites are: first look upon his righteous life, recognize that we are indeed dead and are in need of this life then believe it and receive it.

## Our Hope

Adam passed on his nakedness—he passed on what was devoid of life, light, the goodness and righteousness of God. What he gave us was darkness; devoid of love, and full with selfishness, hate, covetousness, murder; yeah sin! “But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet selfish, hateful, covetous and murderous; sinners, Christ died for us. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, **we shall be saved by his life.**” Romans 5:8, 10.

“And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken (*make alive*) your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.” (*Rom 8:10, 11*)

Herein is our hope of salvation. It is found in the grace of God through Jesus Christ. Yeah; even in the last Adam; the quickening Spirit. The doing of the last Adam is the undoing of the first. Through the transgression of Adam the 1<sup>st</sup>. death is passed upon all men but by the obedience and righteousness of one man even Jesus Christ, the last Adam, the grace of God and the free gift of grace through him is abundant to all. (*See verse 18*).

Christ had to die so he could redeem us from SIN which was causing death. So what did he do? He took the SIN, and the death sentence that was pronounced upon **all**, and reconciled (*made peace with*) **all** mankind unto God. As I mentioned earlier, as it was that **all** have sinned, and death was pronounced upon **all**; so in taking our place Jesus died the death that **all** of mankind should die. He bore the **SIN** of the World. (*See John 1:29*) Thus he made possible, a probation for **all** mankind; he bore the SIN of Adam and all his extensions; future past and present. But it did not stop there. Dying to our SIN which he carried in his own body gave him the victory over the flesh which further demonstrates the quality of the life he possessed by inheritance, which is the righteousness and goodness of God. Having been resurrected from the dead by the Spirit of God, we have hope. For the same quality of life he lived right up until he died, he is now able to give to **all**; that **all** who believes might live the same resurrected life in him by faith. “...For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith”. (*Gal.:5:5*). Yes God’s grace is sufficient for **all**. Every woman, man and child who comes to him in faith will receive this life of righteousness; the seed of God, found in Christ Jesus. Our Lord has prepared a feast of Life, and **all** are welcome and are invited to receive everlasting life through his grace.

## God’s Grace!

What is grace? The Webster’s New World Dictionary has several definitions; it even has a few for Theology.

### **Its 7<sup>th</sup> definition is:**

- a) A period of time granted beyond the date set for the performance of an act or payment of an obligation; temporary exemption and,
- b) Favour shown by granting such a delay.

### **The theological; definition 8:**

- a) The unmerited love and favour of God toward mankind
- b) Divine influence acting in a person to make the person pure, morally strong, etc.
- c) The condition of a person brought to God’s favour through this influence

d) A special virtue, gift, or help given to a person by God.

Given the definitions above, let us apply them to its usage as it applies to salvation and in particularly Romans chapter 5 to see what we can learn of the grace God in offering to mankind. We may even bring them together, harmonize them and get a broader picture of its meaning.

Again let us go back to the beginning. Before Adam sinned God warned them that in the day they shall eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil they shall surely die. But we know that that did not immediately happen to them physically and we know now that a sentence of death was placed upon them immediately the moment they disobeyed God. So, based on the Webster's definition (7. a), they were granted a period of time beyond the day they should have died for the payment of sin, an obligation of justice, temporarily exempting them from death; in which a favour was granted in such delay, and (d) a gift of special virtue and help was made available to them. Why? It is because of, (definition 8.a) the unmerited **love** and favour of God toward mankind. How Beautiful and **Wonderful!**

"But how was God able to do this?" You may ask. "Jesus had not yet died, so how was justice served?"

The answer lies in the foreknowledge of God and we read about it in the revelation of Jesus Christ. Look at the words of the greatest prophet, John the Baptist, the forerunner of the Messiah. "The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God!" (*John 1:29, 36*) Now let us read Revelation chapter 13 and in the last part of verse 8: "...whose names are not written in the book of life of **the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world**". He was slain from the foundation of the world! That is, before the world was made, he was reckoned slain! Jesus, as far as his Father was concerned, was as if he were already slain for mankind. God had already given Jesus to die as a propitiation for mankind. This sacrifice reckoned as been done, made the way for grace to be granted to humanity; so that Adam could be given probationary time, and could receive through faith, this grace along with all his children. In helping the pair to understand the nature of sin and its consequences God kill an animal and used the skin to cover them both; symbolizing that through his death and resurrection, the covering of his righteousness was made possible.

### **Our Probation**

Many of us understand the meaning of the word "Parole". The most popular meaning is the one associated with prisoners. The Webster's definition (3 a) is: "the release of a prisoner whose sentence has not expired, on condition of future good behaviour. The sentence is not set aside and the individual remains under the supervision of a parole board". On the other hand, the 2<sup>nd</sup> definition of probation from the same dictionary is: "the suspension of a sentence of a convicted but not yet imprisoned, on condition of good behaviour and regular reporting to a probation officer". Which one applies to us? I would think is the latter. Adam should have died the moment he sinned but he was granted a stay of that punishment; a probation, and as God demonstrated to them by the sacrifice of the animal, the death of Christ, they looked forward to, and accepted by faith, the atoning gift of the righteousness of Christ.

Although the heavenly justice system is not exactly represented by the earthly, it gives a reasonable view of what God has done for us through His grace. When Adam sinned he was

placed on probation and every child which is born into this world is given a life on probation because of what Jesus did at Calvary.

Because Jesus died the death that Adam should have died, he has claimed the right to resurrect all; inclusive of the repented saved sinner, as well as the impenitent. The righteous will be resurrected to everlasting life and the sinners will be resurrected to be punished for the rejected opportunity to be saved; what they did during their probation; not so much for the SIN they received from Adam but for not believing on the only begotten Son of God; for not accepting the free gift of the righteous life of Jesus who came to give life and life more abundantly. They would have violated their probation and so the sentence of death is unsuspending. This is brought out in the parable of Jesus, of the unmerciful servant; who when his master had forgiven him of a huge debt, found a fellow servant, who owed him a small amount of money, and required him to repay in full. But when the fellow servant could not repay him, he cast him into prison until he is able to repay. When his master heard what had happened he called him and said; "O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee? And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him." (*Matt. 18:32-34*) In this case even though his master had forgiven him and suspended his punishment, because of what he did afterwards, his punishment was unsuspending. It seems he was on probation and he blew it.

Dear reader; brother or sister of mankind, today we have the opportunity to accept life instead of death. We know not when our probation will end. We know not the time of cessation of this probationary life we now have. Therefore it is befitting for you as well as for us all to accept the free gift of God in Christ Jesus; if you will believe. He knows that we cannot help ourselves because we are born with this thing called SIN which has condemned us to die and in this helpless state; Jesus Christ sacrificed and laid down his life; even the shameful death of the cross, in our stead, and in exchange for ours he offers his pure righteous life. If you have not yet experienced this new life, will you not now accept His free offer? He is eagerly waiting for you to come unto him; his arms are stretched out to you right now. If you recognize your helplessness, right now, he is able to help you. Now matter how many times you have failed trying to do the right; trying to be righteous by your own efforts; trying to keep His laws and failed, and have now come to understand that you cannot do it while you are in Adam with the nature of SIN in you, then, confess to Him all that burdens you and he will forgive and save you right now. If you do so right now, then Jesus will, in exchange for your worthless depraved life, live his righteous life in you and save you from eternal death. You will be a new creation; born again of the spiritual Adam, Jesus Christ. The door is opened unto everlasting life and Jesus is that open door; the way, the truth and the life and you are invited to come in and sup with Him.

May God richly bless you!