

The **STORY** *of* **REDEMPTION**



God Reaching Out to Restore **COMMUNITY**
through the cross of Jesus Christ



**WHAT KIND OF GOD
DO WE SERVE?**

Part 2: The God of Grace

Note: For instructions on how to best use and lead this study, please go to www.StoryofRedemption.com.

- Download free .pdfs of each lesson!
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The **STORY** of Redemption

What Kind of God Do We Serve?

PART 2: THE GOD OF GRACE

When you think of God, what image comes to mind? If you struggle in your understanding of who God is, you are not alone. Events like 9/11, the constant news reports of violence, and our own personal tragedies can cause us to question who God is. Some see God as an old man in the sky who is either unaware of all the evil things happening here on earth, or is powerless to stop them. Others believe that God *is* aware and all-powerful, but because he does nothing to prevent tragic events, he must be an uncaring God.



These questions are natural to ask. In fact, people of all ages have asked these questions. But the Bible gives much different answers to who God is and what he is doing. Scripture testifies that God is a gracious God. **Grace is an undeserved, unearned, free gift from God given to us out of his love. This grace is God's continuous blessing in our lives that covers over our sin and/or empowers us for daily living.**

1. DID GOD GIVE GRACE TO ADAM AND EVE?

The creation story is a perfect illustration of God's grace. God created Adam and Eve out of love, and he showered them with great gifts. **They were made in his image, provided food, work, and a soul mate, and made co-rulers over the entire world.** Most especially, they were blessed with God's continuous presence as he walked and talked with them. They did not earn any of these things, nor could they earn them. All of these were God's gracious gifts to them.

Adam and Eve destroyed their relationship with God and each other by eating of the forbidden fruit. Because of their disobedience, God punished them by casting them out of the Garden of Eden, symbolizing the loss of community. But even as he punished them, God showed his grace by providing them clothes. What do these clothes demonstrate? They show us that God still cared

Adam and Eve's Sin

- Not believing God
- Trying to be their own gods and live independently from him God
- Eating the forbidden fruit

Their Punishment

- Food was harder to get out of the ground
- Childbearing pains increased
- Had to leave the Garden of Eden

God's Grace

- He gave them life, food, work, soul mate, rule, & his presence
- He gave them clothes

about Adam and Eve even though they had been disobedient. Despite their sin, God was not willing to send Adam and Eve out into the world unprotected.

All that we have today that is good--our family, children, jobs, home--is God's gracious gift to us. And yet, far too often we believe that we receive these things by our own merit, hard work, or even "luck." These blessings are from God. And when we sin, like Adam and Eve, we need God's grace to cover our sin.

Where have you felt and experienced God's grace in your life?

2. DOES GOD GIVE GRACE TO EVIL PEOPLE LIKE CAIN?

After Adam and Eve left the Garden, Eve gave birth to two sons: Cain, who was firstborn, and his brother Abel. One day, Abel offered a sacrifice to God from his flocks, while Cain offered to God some of his fruit. For some reason, perhaps because of a difference in their hearts, God was pleased with Abel's sacrifice and not Cain's. This made Cain angry, and his anger would lead him to sin.

^{5b} So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast.

⁶ Then the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? ⁷ If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must rule over it."

⁸ Now Cain said to his brother Abel, "Let's go out to the field." While they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him (Gen. 4:5b-8).



Because of his sin, the ground would no longer produce food for Cain.

Ironically, Cain was angry and jealous because he did not have God's approval—and in response, he committed murder, further alienating him from God.

⁹ Then the LORD said to Cain, "Where is your brother Abel?"

"I don't know," he replied. "Am I my brother's keeper?"

¹⁰ The LORD said, "What have you done? Listen! Your brother's blood cries

Cain's Sin

- Being angry at his brother
- Murdering his brother Abel

His Punishment

- He was under a curse
- The ground would not produce crops for him
- He would be a restless wanderer

God's Grace

- He gave him life, family, & crops
- He placed a mark on Cain's head so no one would kill him

out to me from the ground. ¹¹ Now you are under a curse and driven from the ground, which opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. ¹² When you work the ground, it will no longer yield its crops for you. You will be a restless wanderer on the earth" (Gen. 4:9-12).

But again, even when punishing a murderous man like Cain, God showed his gracious nature. When Cain cried out to the Lord, God heard his call.

¹³ Cain said to the LORD, "My punishment is more than I can bear. ¹⁴ Today you are driving me from the land, and I will be hidden from your presence; I will be a restless wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me."

¹⁵ But the LORD said to him, "Not so; anyone who kills Cain will suffer vengeance seven times over." Then the LORD put a mark on Cain so that no one who found him would kill him (Gen. 4:13-15).

Despite Cain's terrible crime, God showed mercy and grace to Cain. First, he did not kill him, though he surely deserved it. Second, when Cain cried out that his punishment was too great, God placed a mark on his head so that no one who found him would kill him. **Many times we cry out for justice against others, but when we do wrong, like Cain, we cry out for mercy and grace.** And often God both hears and answers our call.

How has God been gracious to you when you have made mistakes?

3. DOES GOD GIVE GRACE TO GOOD PEOPLE LIKE NOAH?

Adam and Eve would have other sons and daughters after Cain and Abel, and humanity soon began to grow and multiply. Unfortunately, within a few generations all of the world would become evil and disobedient to God, but **"Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord"** (6:8). (NKJV).

⁹ This is the account of Noah and his family. Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked faithfully with God. ¹⁰ Noah had three sons: Shem, Ham and Japheth.

¹¹ Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight and was full of violence. ¹² God saw how corrupt the earth had become, for all the people on earth had corrupted their ways. ¹³ So God said to Noah, "I am going to put an end to all people, for the earth is filled with violence because of them. I am surely going to destroy both them and the earth. ¹⁴ So make yourself an ark . . . ¹⁷ I am going to bring floodwaters on the earth to destroy all life under the heavens . . ." (Gen. 6:9-14, 17).



God sent a flood to destroy the world because of humanity's wickedness, but he spared Noah.

Because of the world's wickedness, God decided to destroy them. The Lord sent rain upon the earth for 40 days and nights, and the earth was covered

in water and all living things except those on the ark were wiped out. But the “Lord remembered Noah.” He sent a wind across the sea, and the waters receded.

15 Then God said to Noah, 16 “Come out of the ark, you and your wife and your sons and their wives. 17 Bring out every kind of living creature that is with you—the birds, the animals, and all the creatures that move along the ground—so they can multiply on the earth and be fruitful and increase in number upon it.”

18 So Noah came out, together with his sons and his wife and his sons’ wives

20 Then Noah built an altar to the LORD and, taking some of all the clean animals and clean birds, he sacrificed burnt offerings on it. 21 The LORD smelled the pleasing aroma and said in his heart: “Never again will I curse the ground because of humans, even though every inclination of his heart is evil from childhood. And never again will I destroy all living creatures, as I have done” (Gen. 8:15-18, 20-21).



As a sign of his covenant of grace, God put a rainbow in the sky.

God cannot remain in fellowship with those who, like the people of Noah’s time, have hearts that are evil. God destroyed that people because they were so contrary to the goodness for which they were created. And yet, God showed love and grace to Noah, and he vowed to never again destroy the world in the same way. As a sign of this covenant of grace, God put a rainbow in the sky (9:12-17). **If we, like Noah, turn to God, he will show us love and grace as well.**

Noah’s World’s Sin

- They were corrupt and full of violence

Their Punishment

- They were destroyed by the flood

God’s Grace

- He gave Noah his family and saved them
- He made a covenant with Noah

Do you think today’s world is any different than that of Noah’s time? If we had lived in Noah’s time, do you think God would have spared our world?

4. DOES GOD GIVE GRACE TO PRIDEFUL, CONFUSED PEOPLE?

After the flood, Noah’s family and descendants began to multiply; however, rather than spreading out and subduing all of the earth as God had commanded, they decided to gather together in one place.

3 They said to each other, “Come, let’s make bricks and bake them thoroughly.” They used brick instead of stone, and tar for mortar. 4 Then they

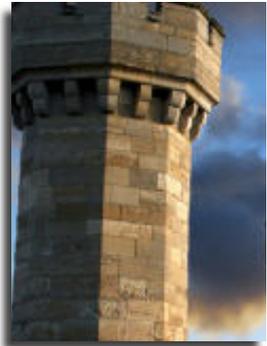
said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves; otherwise we will be scattered over the face of the whole earth" (Gen. 11:3-4).

In their pride they decide to build a tower that reaches the heavens, but the tower is not so great to God. He "comes down" from heaven to examine the people.

⁶ The LORD said, "If as one people speaking the same language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them. ⁷ Come, let us go down and confuse their language so they will not understand each other." ⁸ So the LORD scattered them from there over all the earth, and they stopped building the city. ⁹ That is why it was called Babel (Gen. 11:6-9a).

The whole story speaks of humanity's pathetic and misguided attempts to "reach heaven" by themselves and become their own god. Note that they:

- **Use brick and tar, rather than stone and mortar.**
These inferior building supplies show that their efforts are doomed.
- **Want to build a name for themselves rather than try to glorify the name of God.** Ironically, they end up with a name--Babel, which means "confused."
- **Build the tower so that they wouldn't be scattered.**
But that is exactly what happens, for God confuses their languages and scatters them. Community was again lost that day due to sin.



The people of Babel showed their "confusion" when they sought to build a tower to heaven.

Throughout these stories we have seen that each time after sin and punishment, God gives grace to his people. But in the Tower of Babel, where is the grace? For that answer, we must wait until the next part of the story!

People of Babel's Sin

- They tried to make a name for themselves
- They tried to build a tower to heaven

Their Punishment

- God confused their languages
- God scattered them over all the earth

God's Grace

- Life, families, abilities
- ?

What have we learned about God in this study? What grace are you thankful for and do you still need in your life?

In the next part of the story, we will learn about a promise that God makes to Abraham. In this promise, God shows his grace to Abraham—and all humanity. The *Story of Redemption* continues.

Part 2: The God of Grace

www.StoryofRedemption.com

**The STORY of
REDEMPTION**

QUESTIONS:

Fill in the Blank.

1. Grace is an undeserved, unearned, _____ from God.
2. God gave _____ to Adam and Eve as a gracious gift before sending them out of the Garden of Eden because of their disobedience.
3. After Cain killed Abel, God put a _____ on Cain's forehead, warning others to not harm him, in a demonstration of his grace.
4. God put a _____ in the sky after the flood as a gracious sign that he would never destroy the world again by water.
5. God spared Noah and his wife, Noah's three sons named _____, _____, and _____, and their wives from the flood.
6. Babel means _____.

Matching.

5. _____ Adam and Eve
6. _____ Cain.
7. _____ Noah's world.
8. _____ The people of the Tower of Babel.
 - a. Were destroyed because it was full of corruption and violence.
 - b. Sinned by not believing God.
 - c. Sinned through anger, jealousy and violence.
 - d. Sinned through pride.

Discovery Bible Study - Make three columns on a piece of paper In column 1, write out the following verse. In column 2, write the verse in your own words. In column 3, write out how you will apply/obey this verse this week. Come to the next study prepared to share this.

"^B For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— ⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9).

For Further Study: *What do you learn about grace from these passages?*

John 1:14 _____
2 Corinthians 8:1-9 _____
Romans 5:1 _____
Romans 12:6-8 _____
1 Peter 4:10 _____

To receive answers to the above questions, learn more about Discovery Bible Study, or receive the next part of the Story, go to www.StoryofRedemption.com or see your study leader.