

Introduction

The first 10 verses of chapter 2 have laid out instructions in various age groups or life situations (older and younger men, older and younger women, and slaves). The foundation for this teaching is given now—namely, that God’s grace in salvation trains us to behave in ways consistent with it.

1. Past – v. 11.....The Appearance of God – The First Coming in Grace

Please understand this: the point of the verse is that the grace of God APPEARED. This is a past tense (aorist) verb. It happened in the past. Yes, the appearance of that grace has an ongoing impact (as if a perfect tense) but here is just an aorist, describing the event as a whole, that it *happened*.

You are probably familiar with the definition of grace: unmerited favor. But more than being an abstract concept, here it refers to the incarnation and the whole of Christ’s cross-work, the substitutionary atonement. It uses the word “epiphany” to describe the past appearance of this grace. God’s grace is inseparable from God’s Son, for “of his fullness have all we received, and grace for grace...grace and truth came through Jesus Christ” (John 1:16-17). The “grace of God was upon Him” (Luke 2:40). Some suggest that this “grace” refers to the gospel of grace. True enough, but not apart from the coming of the graceful One!

A. It is NOT that all men saw this grace with their eyes (a gospel in nature?).

It is apparent that not all men have seen this grace, whether you take the grace to refer to the incarnation or the gospel of grace resulting from the incarnation. Many have lived since Christ died and did not see him (John 20:29); and many today have not heard a stitch of the true gospel. Some suggest that there is a gospel “in the stars” or somewhere else discernible from nature. Unfortunately, this view denies texts like Rom. 10:17, that faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God, or 1 Cor. 2:9-13, which teaches that the things of God *cannot* be discerned by human senses. If the gospel were in nature, it would have to be discerned with human senses, and it cannot be discerned that way because the only way it comes is through revelation in the Bible. Furthermore, sin limits man’s ability to correctly discern that which can be seen in nature anyway (1 Cor. 2:14-15), so that even if the gospel were visible in nature, no man could correctly interpret it!

Speaking of the appearance or “seeing” of grace, the Biblical example of Barnabas is neat. In Acts 11:23, the Bible says that when Barnabas “had seen the grace of God” he was glad. He saw the powerful effects that the gospel of grace had on the folks in Antioch.

B. It is NOT that all men will be saved (universalist view).

Grammatically it is better to take the “to all men” with “brings salvation” so that the grace brings salvation to all men rather than the grace appearing to all men. But this must not be construed to teach that all men are saved—such a notion is totally foreign to the Scriptures. Many presently are and ultimately will be lost.

C. It is NOT that all kinds of men will saved (limited atonement view)

Some folks take this position, but the text does not say “all kinds” of men. It says all!

D. It IS that grace appeared.

The point is that the grace appeared in history. The word “appeared” is emphasized in that it is the very first word in the verse. It was a past event of great significance.

This grace of God is used in several ways in the Bible. It is the realm in which we exist as Christians and must continue (Acts 13:43; Rom. 5:2, 2 Cor. 1:12, 6:1, Heb. 12:15); it is that to which we commit our endeavors for safekeeping and success (Acts 14:26, 15:40, 1 Cor. 15:10); it is what we testify (Acts 20:24, 1 Peter 5:12) and what is accepted for salvation (Col. 1:6); it comes through Christ (Rom. 5:15); it is given to all believers (1

Cor. 1:4, 2 Cor. 8:1, 9:14), especially necessary for those in the Lord’s work (1 Cor. 3:10; Eph. 3:7); that which we must not depart from (Gal. 2:21); that which is related by revelation (Eph. 3:2); it is that by which Christ suffered death (Heb. 2:9); is related to spiritual gifts (1 Peter 4:10). You might want to visit those Scriptures and see how you might categorize the verses yourself. It will be a helpful spiritual exercise!

E. It IS that grace brought salvation for all.

Think of it—salvation. It did not bring just an example, but the very salvation from sin and eternal death. Actually the verb “to bring” is supplied in English: it does not appear in Greek. Basically, God’s grace “amounts to” or “is” salvation for all men.

It brought salvation to all men in that it made it available to them. It is there for the taking, but if only they would grab a hold of it then it could have an impact on them. Here we see a difference between in salvation between provision (unlimited/infinite: God so loved the **world**) and application (limited: **narrow** is the way that leads to life; many are called but **few** are chosen...)

Some may object to the idea that Christ died for all. Apart from this verse and other verses that say so explicitly (1 John 2:2, John 3:16, 1 Tim. 2:6, 4:10), there are other arguments suggesting that Christ’s death is provisional for every person. It is my conviction that the atonement cannot be thought of in numerical terms. There is no “number of sinners” or “number of sins” which, if one were added, would exhaust the value of the atoning work of Christ’s violent, bloody self-sacrifice. We are dealing with infinities here, the infinite demerit of any and all sin, the infinite merit of Christ, and so on. We are not talking mathematics here! Some may suggest a double payment has been made for unbelievers to go to Hell, since they pay for their sins there. I wonder, though, if this argument is sound.

1. First, is over- or double-payment really a moral problem—if one party ignores what the other party paid?

2. Second, the payment of Christ is not accepted for, i.e. not applied to the unbeliever since he wants to take his case onto his own shoulders and thus Christ’s offer goes “unused” in his case.

3. Third, it is doubtful if even the eternal suffering of a sinner can accomplish the same result that the perfect death of the perfect Christ did. The difference is very great—I mean, a sinless substitute versus a sinful criminal, a divine Son versus an enemy, a once-completed work versus a never finished penalty...

2. Present – v. 12.....The Application – Holy Living

This grace of which we have been speaking not only *appeared* in the past but it also presently *teaches*. This is a continual present tense. It appeared once and now continually teaches. This is not the normal word for teach, but means to chasten, discipline, instruct, or train. It refers to a process of development, in bringing a person up to speed in his ability to make right choices. God’s grace gives us guidance, then, “leading us to deny...and to live...”

Notice that the grace appeared to *all*, but it teaches *us*. Paul specifically focuses in on believers and not on unbelievers at this point.

A. Denying

The verb “to deny” means to refuse to pay attention to, to disregard, to renounce. This is modified by two different areas to deny:

1. Ungodliness. This includes so much. What it means is un-God-likeness. Anything that would be unlike God to do, that is what we are to not do. Pornography, nudity of any sort, profanity, innuendo, violence. (All of this is particularly in the media today—and I’m NOT talking about only cable TV or the theater.) Then there is strife and backbiting and gossip. And all kinds of other stuff fits here. Search your conscience to see if there is anything unlike God in you. Deny it.

2. Worldly Desires. Not only are ungodly practices to be denied, but desires of the mind that are worldly, namely, things that are world-like, or that the world likes. All such are to be denied.

Consider the sin lists in the Bible as a starting point for what to “deny.” Some of the lists are found in Matt. 15:19, Rom. 1:29-31, 1 Cor. 6:9-10, Gal. 5:19-21, 1 Tim. 1:9-10.

B. Living

Here is an exhortation. The intent or purpose of the “curriculum” is to get you to live properly. Here’s how:

1. Soberly. We’ve seen this in Titus 2 already four times (2:2, 4, 5, 6). Included are the notions of self-control, prudence, thoughtfulness, sensibility, reasonableness, seriousness.
2. Righteously. That is, uprightly. An attitude of trying to shave corners is not upright, dear friend.
3. Godly. Whatever God would be like, that’s what we are supposed to be like.

Notice now that we have seen the negative (denying) and the positive (living). This is coordinate with our studies in sanctification where we have seen the contrasts of put off/put on, and mortify/grow.

3. Future – v. 13 The Appearance of God – The Second Coming in Glory

This is actually an injunction which says that we ought to have a present expectation for the fulfillment of the future event of the coming of Christ. In that sense, it would fit under the “present” category above.

In the Old Testament, progressive revelation had not made it entirely clear how the advent of Christ would come in two stages—what we know now as the first coming and the second coming. Similarly, as New Testament revelation unfolded, it became clear that the second coming itself has two stages—the rapture and the second coming proper. (Please ask after the sermon if you don’t understand this.)

Without going into all the details, suffice it to say that we must be looking forward for the Lord Jesus Christ Himself to come. That is to be our eager expectation and guiding hope, no matter if the times are good or bad. This is the main point of the verse. Grace not only teaches us godly living, but also godly “hoping.” If you wonder how this applies to you, check out your own hopes and aspirations. Do you look forward to the next paycheck, vacation, sporting event, etc. more than you do the coming of Christ? Do you look for that coming at all? This would seem to indicate a misplacement of priorities in your inner life which calls for some adjustments.

The word “come” here is the same word that was used of the appearance of the grace of God in the past. It is the word from whence our word “epiphany” derives.

Beyond this, details are given about this coming of Christ. It is said to be:

A. Blessed. This means happy, favored, fortunate, or privileged. Here it speaks of the experience that we will have at the coming of Christ for us. Others will not be so fortunate (2 Thess. 1:8).

B. Glorious. The coming of Christ again cannot be said to be anything less than glorious. If anything has glory, this event will. In 2 Thess. 1:10 the Bible says that Christ will come to be glorified and admired.

C. Of our Great God and Savior Jesus Christ. The first thing to notice about this phrase is that it equates “Savior” with “Jesus Christ.” That is clear enough.

But the second thing to note about this phrase is that it is an *explicit affirmation of the deity of Christ—it equates God with Jesus Christ*. There is one other text just as strong in the NT (2 Peter 1:1; see also 1:11, 2:20, and 3:18 for “the Lord and Savior” which is grammatically identical). The grammar here is indisputable. In 1798 a linguist named Granville Sharp discovered a rule that in Greek, when you have “the” + “noun” + “and” + “noun” and the nouns are personal, singular, and non-proper (as they are here), then the

two nouns *always* refer to the exact same person. Therefore, it is not correct to translate this verse as if two people were coming (God and our Saviour Jesus Christ). It is correct to translate it as one person (our God and Saviour Jesus Christ). There are no exceptions to this rule in NT Greek. English translations made or revised before 1798, and many after that time, get this wrong. Thus the Bible tells us directly that Christ is God, that is, God the Son. Jesus Christ is your *God*, friends. Don’t entertain lesser thoughts of Him than this.

This hope has a sanctifying influence—looking back to verse 12 where sanctification is in view.

Verse 14 reflects some similar themes. We see the very purpose of the atoning work of Christ was not only to get rid of sin, but also to produce holiness so that believers would be a special possession to Christ, ones who are very eager to do good works. That’s what Christians ought to be doing!

Requirement to Keep on Preaching – v. 15

The text says in verse 15 that such truths as these—namely, the fact that God’s grace trains us to deny sin, live holy lives, and await the second coming of Christ—are to be preached publicly. Titus has to a) **speak** them, i.e. get them out in the open as part of his job; b) **exhort** people to live by them, i.e. to tell people to get with God’s program; and c) **rebuke** people who do not live by them, i.e. to expose the sin of those that are wrong in order to bring correction. The gospel of the grace of God brings with it the natural fruit of holy living. If it does not, it is not the gospel of God’s grace—it would then be “grace” from somewhere else.

This proclamation is to be done “with all authority” in that Titus has an authoritative source to preach from. This is just the same way that Jesus taught (Matt. 7:29; Mark 1:22). Not only is his source authoritative, but because it is, he does not have to be a wet noodle as he preaches. He can preach with an authoritative air about him.

It is true that the authority does not reside in the preacher as much as the message that he preaches. But one caution: if you take this fact too far, you can begin to despise or disregard the preacher. Do not foster an attitude of degrading the preacher, even a young one! Titus is told that he is not to let anyone despise him. By his actions, attitude, deportment, whatever, he should not make himself “despicable.” But if there is no gross problems on the part of the pastor and it comes down to it, no one should despise a true preacher of God’s word simply because of the admonition of this text—DON’T DESPISE! And certainly the preacher should not be despised for doing what he has been told to do, namely, to preach the gospel of the grace of God!

Conclusion

Note how Lehman Strauss summarizes this passage in his article, “A Sanctifying Hope.” BibSac Vol. 120, #478 (Apr-Jun 1963), pp. 161-2.

“These verses contain the story of two appearances of Christ. The first appearing is past and is associated with grace—‘the grace of God has appeared bringing salvation.’ The second appearing is future and is associated with glory—‘looking for that blessed hope, even the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ’ (free translation). It is the second appearing that is called the ‘blessed hope.’ In both appearances God manifests Himself to man in the person of Jesus Christ in order that He might accomplish man’s salvation. The first appearance was the commencement of that salvation; the second appearing will be its consummation. The first appearing saved man from the penalty of sin; the second appearing will save him from the presence and possibility of sin. Thus the two appearances are alike in purpose.

“I prefer to rearrange the words in verse 11 {Titus 2:11} to read, ‘For the grace of God hath appeared bringing salvation to all men.’ This arrangement expresses accurately the force of the Greek text, and it is true to the very nature of the case, for ‘grace and truth came by Jesus Christ’ at His first appearing (John 1:17). Now the two appearances of Christ,

the first in grace, and the second in glory, are in verses 11 {Titus 2:11} and 13 {Titus 2:13} respectively, the first looking back to a past event and the second looking forward to a future event. But it is the verse in between, namely verse 12 {Titus 2:12}, which is the important one for the Christian. It tells him that the operation of grace in salvation is a continuous, lifelong work until grace finds its consummation in glory.

“When the believing sinner accepts the work of divine grace which sent Christ to Calvary for his redemption, he matriculates in the school of grace. Grace becomes his teacher to train, educate, and instruct him. The end of the training course is the second appearing of Christ, and with that great event ever before him, he allows grace to correct and chasten him. But keep in mind that the instruction is for believers only. While grace is bringing salvation to “all men,” it is obvious that all do not want salvation on God’s terms. They who refuse to enter the school of grace cannot receive its instruction. Grace teaches “us,” that is, the Christian believers.”

MAP

The text in Titus 2:14 says that Christ ‘gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself *His* own special people, zealous for good works.’ This verse sounds an important note of the substitutionary atonement in the first preposition ‘for.’ It means that He gave Himself *instead of us, or in place of us, or on our behalf, or as our substitute.*

Note various expressions of universality and limitation in the atonement in this arrangement of various Bible texts:

1. Christ is the propitiation for the world—1 John 2:2, John 3:16

The text in 1 John 2:2 says specifically that Christ Himself IS the propitiation or satisfaction for not only our sins, but for those of the whole world. The provision for all is immediately available in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is an eternal tragedy that many of the world attempt to take care of their own sins instead of realizing that satisfaction has already been made for them. It is not God’s fault, but their own that they refuse the application of the provision to their own dire case.

There is no way in either this text or the John 3:16 passage that “world” can be made anything over than a universal world. It is not “world of all kinds of men” or “world of the elect,” for if it were, then God would certainly have added those phrases.

2. Christ gave Himself for all—1 Timothy 2:6, 4:10 (notice “especially”)

Here we have another universal kind of statement. Of course, we are not talking about *universalism* in which all men are eventually saved. That is not Biblical. We are talking about the provision of an infinite-valued atonement. But we are talking about “all.” All men can look to Jesus and with truth on their lips say that He is the Saviour of all. The “especially” indicates the special applicability of Christ’s saving work to believers. Thinking of it the other way around, there is no one “especially saved” who does not believe.

3. Christ gave Himself for the many—Matthew 20:28; 26:28, Mark 10:45

Here is another statement of the largeness of what Jesus has done. But here it is not “the world” or “all” but “many.” We are now beginning to see a limitation in the benefits of the atonement. Oh that *many* more would come to Christ and enlarge the *many* spoken of here. Alas... but we may thank God for our place in the many.

4. Christ laid down His life for His friends—John 15:13

Who are the friends Christ? Those who do His commands (John 15:14). That is, those who do His commands evidence that they are His friends to begin with. Wonder of wonders is this, that we who were *enemies* are now counted as *friends*! Who could figure?!

5. Christ gave Himself for His people—Matthew 1:21

Many interpreters ignore that the context shows this to be a reference to the people of Israel, but Christ did come for them as well as for the Gentiles. In fact the name Jesus comes from “Jehovah saves.” His coming was intended to save His own people from their sins. Still, it is true that Jews today are on a level playing field with Gentiles in the sense that all must come to faith in Christ. There are no ethnic shortcuts.

6. Christ gave Himself for His sheep—John 10:15

Here the sheep explicitly include Jewish sheep and the sheep ‘which are not of this fold’ – Gentiles (10:16). The sheep metaphor indicates our dependence on the Lord as protector (10:11), as the one who cares for us (10:13), as the one who knows us (10:14), and as the one who gives his life in place of the sheep (10:15).

7. Christ gave Himself for the Church—Ephesians 5:23-26

Here we see that Christ gave Himself for the Church. As we have seen, the “giving” is more effective for these smaller groups of people—they are *really* impacted by the Lord’s work and in that sense He gave Himself especially for them.

8. Christ gave Himself for us—Titus 2:14, Eph. 5:2, and for our sins—Galatians 1:4, 1 John 2:2

We who sit here can say this for a certainty if we are born again. Of course, there is a purpose for this Self-giving of our Lord. In Titus, it is that we would be redeemed from evil and be purified to good works. In Galatians, it is that we would be delivered from the present evil age. Believer, whether you are old or young, slave or free, you too fit into this group. So do the apostle Paul and Titus, because Paul uses an inclusive “us.”

Have you ever had someone ask you about your job, “Why are you doing this? What is the purpose of your being here?” Imagine the if someone asked the Lord, “Why are you sacrificing yourself?” He would reply with verse 14—in order that He might redeem and purify. That’s what He wants to do!

To redeem means to liberate or loose by payment of a ransom. It answers to the fact that we are, before salvation, in bondage to sin (John 8:34). We are released out of the slave-mastery of sin when redemption is applied to us.

To purify simply means to clean, to purge the moral defilement of sin. In other words, we are redeemed from sin—but Christ’s work goes the extra mile and cleanses us from sin itself so that we can be his own special possession.

His interest, note, is not in “some” sins, but “every” one, “all” iniquity. We are not to harbor certain special, personal, “little” sins. They all have to go—they must all be mortified. They all fall under the redeeming and purifying work of Christ.

Finally, we are then to be a people who have zeal for good works.

9. Christ gave Himself for me—Galatians 2:20

This gets right down to the heart of the matter. Everyone else may have their own ideas, beliefs, convictions, etc. But when a person can truly say with his mind, heart, and will that Christ died “FOR ME” then he is a born-again person. Eventually the gospel, and the table of the Lord itself, has to be brought down to the individual level. “All” or “many” or “the Church” or “us” does not ultimately save a man—but the “me” does. The personal acceptance is what is key!

MAP