

**Text:** Titus 2:11-15, Part 1

**Title:** Saving Grace – The First Coming

**Truth:** God’s Salvation has Appeared in the Person of Jesus Christ

**Date/Location:** Sunday July 25, 2021 at FBC

## Introduction to the Text

Verses 11 to 14 beg to be memorized by every Christian. Read them:

11 For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, 12 teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, 13 looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, 14 who 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.

15 Speak these things, exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no one despise you.

Verses 11-14 comprise a single sentence in the original text. With such a long sentence, it takes extra effort to grasp the meaning. The NIV, which is known to break long sentences into shorter ones, divides it into two sentences (verse 11 is one, and 12-14 is the second).

Notice that 2:1 begins with “speak the things which are proper...” and verse 15 ends the chapter with “speak these things...” The apostle is emphasizing to Titus the need to teach on the matters of verses 1-10.

## I. Structure of the Text

- A. Verse 11 opens (in English) with the word “For.” This is an extremely important word upon which our understanding of the passage hinges. It connects the two pieces of text at 2:1-10 and 2:11-15 and makes of them a single big idea.
- B. Paul is going to explain that the doctrine taught in verses 1-10 is not made up of raw commands. God does not just tell us how to behave and then give zero explanation. There is not a *legalistic*

basis for the injunctions to older and younger men and women and servants.

- C. There is a *grace* basis. In other words, why we are to live as specified in verses 1-10 is BECAUSE of the grace of God. Stop to think about that for a few minutes occasionally. Because of God's unmerited favor, we are called to live godly lives. Such lives are the only reasonable response to what God has done for us (Rom. 12:1—reasonable service). World religions focus almost entirely on what we are supposed to do to merit the favor of the gods. In contrast, Christianity focuses on what God has done and how it enables and instructs our grateful, submissive, loving response to it.

## II. Theology of the Trinity

God and Savior are the same Person. There are several arguments for the identity of God and Savior as the singular person Jesus. See Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, p. 426–29.

- A. The singular phrase “god and savior” sometimes was used in Greek language to refer to a human monarch. Paul uses it in the singular here to refer to one Person. There is a no “god and savior” anywhere but the Christian’s God and Savior, namely Jesus Christ.
- B. There is a rule of Greek grammar called Sharp’s Rule which is decisive here. It says in a situation like this—where there are two personal, singular, non-proper nouns connected by an *and*—that the two nouns refer to the same person. It is therefore clearly one person of whom Paul is speaking. It does not say “the great Father and Savior Jesus Christ,” as if Jesus is the Father. Jesus is God, and the Father is God, and Jesus is not the Father. If Paul understood that Jesus were not in fact God, then it is impossible that he would have stated the verse this way. It is evident that he did believe in the deity of Jesus Christ, as did the other apostles.
- C. The appearance of God = appearance of Jesus. Always in the New Testament, Jesus is the one who appears. The *Parousia* is the appearance of Jesus again, not of the Father.
- D. The second coming. We expect that the Lord Jesus will return and begin His kingdom reign. Nowhere do we see the New Testament

teaching that the Father also will come with Him in some visible manifestation. The vision of the Father is in Revelation in the heavenly state, but not before at the second coming of Jesus.

Now we come to the text itself.

### **III. Grace Appearing, v. 11**

- A. The grace of God means that God has extended favor toward humans that is undeserved and unearned. In fact, *we ill-deserve* God's favor. We are unworthy. It is unwarranted in us for God to show any kind of blessing toward us. Yet His grace comes to the world in two basic ways:
1. Common. All of creation enjoys being a recipient of God's common, unwarranted favor. Simply because God is gracious, He provides for the world rain and sunshine and food and love and life and restraint of sin and relief from suffering (Matthew 5:45). Basically, any broadly experienced "good" that you can find traces its way back to divine common grace. And that, in turn, is connected back to the work of Christ which means that God's wrath against sin has been satisfied and God can freely offer grace toward the world.
  2. Special. Special grace is that exercised by God toward specific people or groups, not toward all commonly or equally. For today, those people are Christians and groups of Christians in churches. The grace is exhibited when God draws certain ones to Himself in saving faith and pours out upon them forgiveness and all the other blessings of salvation.
- B. The appearance of God's grace here specifically has to do with that which brings salvation. As I understand it, there are both common and special aspects of this salvation-manifestation of God's favor.
1. The common aspect of the grace of God that brings salvation is that it has appeared to all people. The NIV captures part of this idea in its phrase "that offers salvation to all people." God has sent Christ into the world to save the world. The gospel is freely offered. It is broadly offered to every person by ministers of the gospel daily, weekly, in almost every country, over the airwaves, in print Bibles, in tracts, digital media, and so forth.

2. The special aspect of the grace of God is that this unmerited favor of the gospel does not land in every heart the same way (Matthew 13:19-23). Only a fraction of people who are invited come (Matthew 22:14). It is to those ones that the special operations of God's grace are effective.

C. How *did* this grace appear in history? It appeared to the world not in writing nor by verbal explanation, but in the Person of Jesus Christ. John 1:14 tells us that this One, full of grace and truth, became flesh and dwelt among humanity. The entirety of the theology of the cross and all the gospel—from an individual being lost to being on the way to heaven, and from a world rejecting Christ to a world that will have Christ as King—is wrapped up under this idea of the grace of God appearing to the world.

How *does* it appear today? By proclamation of the truth and by Christian lives lived in accordance with divine grace.

D. This grace is salvation-bringing grace. You need it. I need it. Every human needs it. If you do not have it, you are lost and not saved and on your way to a Christless eternity in Hell, apart from all manifestations of divine grace.

If you have God's salvation-bringing grace, you have new life, you are free from sin, you have experienced divine forgiveness, you know the love and goodness of God. You have been rescued from sin and death and bondage and enmity and wrath and guilt. You know what true thanksgiving is all about because you thank God who gave such a wonderful gift to you.

## Conclusion

What we will see in the rest of this section is that God's grace did not only appear to bring an initial salvation or rescue from sin. It also enables and teaches us how to live properly. And this is critical for the people of Crete and the people of Ann Arbor because there are many who profess to know God, but in works they deny Him. Both the saving and sanctifying operations of Christ's grace are to be active in the life of a true believer.