

7/1/12

**SERIES: II CORINTHIANS: THE HEART AND HUMILITY OF A
MAN OF GOD, WEEK 24**

TITLE: RECEIVING THE GRACE OF GOD IN VAIN

TEXT: II CORINTHIANS 6:1&2

**INTRODUCTION: (1) CAN A CHRISTIAN FALL FROM GRACE
AND LOSE THEIR SALVATION?**

*** CAN A JUSTIFIED PERSON LOSE HIS OR HER
JUSTIFICATION?**

**** CAN A RECONCILED BELIEVER LOSE HIS OR HER
RECONCILIATION?**

***** CAN A PERSON MADE RIGHTEOUS IN CHRIST LOSE
THAT RIGHTEOUSNESS AT SOME POINT?**

****** CAN A TRUE BELIEVER BECOME AN UNBELIEVING
BELIEVER?**

**(2) CAN A TRUE CHRISTIAN BECOME AN AGNOSTIC OR
AN ATHEIST?**

*** WELL, THE BIBLICAL ANSWER TO ALL THOSE
QUESTIONS IS AN EMPHATIC...NO!**

**** FOR THE BIBLE TEACHES THAT SALVATION IS FOREVER.**

***** AND CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIANS HAVE COME TO REFER TO THIS AS THE DOCTRINE OF ETERNAL SECURITY.**

****** BUT PERHAPS, THE PURITAN'S TERMINOLOGY IS MORE APPROPRIATE; FOR THEY SPOKE OF THE PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS.**

(3) THE TRUTH BEING THAT GOD DOES NOT GUARANTEE SECURITY TO EVERYONE WHO SAYS THEY HAVE REPENTED AND RECEIVED CHRIST.

*** BUT RATHER, THAT THOSE WHOSE FAITH IS GENUINE WILL PROVE OR SHOW THEIR SALVATION IS SECURE BY PERSEVERING TO THE END IN LIVING FOR CHRIST, IN THE WAY OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.**

**** TRUE CHRISTIANS WILL PERSEVERE. AND IF A PERSON TURNS AGAINST CHRIST, DENIES CHRIST CONTINUALLY BY LIFE OR LIP, NO LONGER QUOTE BELIEVING, THEY HAVE RECEIVED THE GRACE OF GOD IN VAIN, MEANING, THAT PERSON WAS NEVER SAVED, A TRUE CHRISTIAN TO BEGIN WITH.**

***** AND NO MATTER HOW CONVINCING A PERSON'S TESTIMONY MIGHT SEEM, ONCE HE OR SHE DENIES CHRIST BY A LIFE OF UNBRIDLED SIN OR BY LIP DENIES**

CHRIST AS GOD THE ONLY SAVIOR, THAT PERSON HAS DEMONSTRATED IRREFUTABLY THAT THEY NEVER WERE SAVED.

****** HOWEVER, FOR THOSE TRULY IN CHRIST, RECONCILED TO GOD, REDEEMED, SAVED, FOR THOSE WHO HAVE TRULY BELIEVED, THEY NEVER FALL FROM GRACE, THEIR BELIEF IS NEVER IN VAIN, FOR OUR ALMIGHTY OMNIPOTENT LORD KEEPS THEM FROM FALLING.**

(4) ANOTHER WAY TO SAY THAT IS, ONCE IN GRACE, ALWAYS IN GRACE. IF YOU ARE SAVED BY GRACE ALONE THROUGH FAITH ALONE IN CHRIST ALONE, YOU WILL NEVER LOSE IT. IF YOU LOSE IT, YOU NEVER HAD IT.

*** TRUE SAINTS PERSEVERE BY GOD'S GRACE.**

**** AND BELOVED, OUR CONFIDENCE IN THE PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS DOES NOT REST UPON OUR CONFIDENCE IN THE CHRISTIAN'S, THE SAINT'S ABILITY, IN THEMSELVES TO PERSEVERE. IT RESTS ON GOD'S POWER TO PRESERVE US. QUOTE II TIMOTHY 4:18, PHILIPPIANS 1:6, HEBREWS 10:14, I PETER 1:4&5, ROMANS 8 AND JUDE V. 24.**

***** AND TRUE BELIEVER, WE SEE FROM THESE PASSAGES THAT THE GROUND FOR OUR CONFIDENCE IN**

PERSEVERANCE IS THE POWER OF GOD AND HIS SOVEREIGN PURPOSE.

****** GOD PROMISES TO FINISH WHAT HE STARTS AND KEEP US BY HIS POWER.**

(5) OUR CONFIDENCE DOES NOT REST IN THE WILL OF MAN, BUT IN THE WILL OF GOD.

*** AND THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE WILL OF MAN AND THE SOVEREIGN POWER OF GOD SEPARATES CALVINISTS OR SOVEREIGN GRACE OR DOCTRINE OF GRACE PEOPLE FROM ARMINIANS.**

**** FOR THE ARMINIAN HOLDS THAT GOD ELECTS PERSONS TO ETERNAL LIFE ONLY ON THE CONDITION OF THEIR VOLUNTARY COOPERATION WITH GRACE AND PERSEVERANCE IN GRACE UNTIL DEATH AS FORESEEN BY HIM.**

***** BUT DOCTRINES OF GRACE PEOPLE BELIEVE THAT GOD CHOOSES, CALLS, JUSTIFIES AND GLORIFIES HIS OWN, HIS SHEEP. HE PRESERVES HIS PEOPLE.**

****** AND THAT'S WHY R. C. SPROUL IN HIS BOOK "CHOSEN BY GOD" WHICH I HIGHLY RECOMMEND WHICH IS IN OUR BOOKSTORE, PREFERS TO SPEAK OF THE**

PRESERVATION OF THE SAINTS OVER THE PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS.

(6) R. C. SPROUL SAID AND I QUOTE: “THE REASON TRUE CHRISTIANS DO NOT FALL FROM GRACE IS THAT GOD GRACIOUSLY KEEPS THEM FROM FALLING. PERSEVERANCE IS WHAT WE DO. PRESERVATION IS WHAT GOD DOES. WE PERSEVERE BECAUSE GOD PRESERVES.” (END QUOTE)

*** AND YES WE BELIEVE TRUE CHRISTIANS CAN FALL SERIOUSLY AND RADICALLY.**

**** HOWEVER WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT THEY CAN FALL TOTALLY AND FINALLY. GOD PRESERVES US, HE HOLDS ON TO US, NOT WE TO HIM.**

***** TO ILLUSTRATE THAT, AGAIN IN HIS BOOK CHOSEN BY GOD, R. C. SPROUL GIVES A CLEAR ILLUSTRATION OF GOD HOLDING ON TO US AND PRESERVING US.**

****** HE SAID AND I QUOTE: “AN ANALOGY OF GOD’S WORK OF PRESERVATION MAY BE SEEN IN THE IMAGE OF A FATHER HOLDING ONTO HIS SMALL CHILD’S HAND AS THEY WALK TOGETHER. IN THE ARMINIAN VIEW, THE SAFETY OF THE CHILD RESTS IN THE STRENGTH OF THE CHILD’S GRIP ON THE FATHER’S HAND. IF THE CHILD LETS GO, HE WILL PERISH. IN THE CALVINIST’S VIEW,**

THE SAFETY OF THE CHILD RESTS IN THE STRENGTH OF THE FATHER'S GRIP ON THE CHILD. IF THE CHILD'S GRIP FAILS, THE FATHER'S GRIP HOLDS FIRM. THE ARM OF THE LORD DOES NOT WAX SHORT." (END QUOTE)

(7) AND THIS ANALOGY GOES RIGHT ALONG WITH WHAT JESUS SAID IN JOHN 10:27-30 (QUOTE THEM).

*** NOW WHAT JOY, PEACE, AND WHAT A MOTIVATION TO LIVE FOR CHRIST, THE TRUTH THAT GOD PRESERVES US.**

**** AND WITH THAT SAID, WE RECOGNIZE THAT THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST IS A MIXED BODY AS THE CORINTHIANS CHURCH WAS IN PAUL'S DAY.**

***** FOR THERE ARE TARES THAT LIVE SIDE BY SIDE WITH THE WHEAT, THAT GOATS LIVE SIDE BY SIDE WITH SHEEP.**

****** AND THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER MAKES IT CLEAR THAT PEOPLE CAN EXPERIENCE A FALSE CONVERSION THROUGH A FALSE PROFESSION. TIME AND TRUTH GO HAND IN HAND. TIME HAS A WAY OF REVEALING THE TRUTH.**

(8) AND SOME PEOPLE MAY HAVE AN APPEARANCE OF FAITH FOR AWHILE, BUT THAT FAITH MAY NOT BE REAL, FOR SOME HAVE QUOTE "BELIEVED IN VAIN," ACCORDING TO I CORINTHIANS 15:1&2 (QUOTE THEM)

*** WELL, THAT POSSIBILITY LEADS US TO OUR TEXT TODAY, FOR PAUL WAS CONCERNED THAT THE CORINTHIANS NOT RECEIVE GOD'S GRACE IN REGARD TO SALVATION IN VAIN.**

**** AND AS IN ANY CHURCH, NOT EVERYONE IN THE CORINTHIANS CHURCH WHO PROFESSED TO BE SAVED, WAS TRULY CONVERTED.**

***** AND SOME HAD INTELLECTUAL KNOWLEDGE OF THE DOCTRINE OF RECONCILIATION, OF JUSTIFICATION, OF SALVATION, BUT DID NOT HAVE SAVING FAITH. THEY HAD NEVER TRULY RECEIVED THE GRACE OF GOD IN SALVATION.**

****** AND THOSE IN THE CORINTHIANS CONGREGATION WHO WERE NOT TRULY SAVED WERE IN GRAVE DANGER OF BEING DECEIVED BY THE FALSE TEACHERS THAT HAD INFILTRATED THE CHURCH.**

(9) AND PAUL WAS CONCERNED THAT THEY HAD RECEIVED THE GRACE OF GOD IN VAIN.

*** BECAUSE OF THAT I'VE TITLED OUR SERMON FOR TODAY, "RECEIVING THE GRACE OF GOD IN VAIN."**

**** AND UNDER THAT TITLE, WE'LL LOOK AT JUST TWO POINTS IN OUR STUDY OF II CORINTHIANS 6:1&2.**

***** NO. 1 THE PARTNERSHIP PAUL HAD WITH GOD IN BEING A WORKER TOGETHER WITH HIM, V. 1A; AND NO. 2 THE PLEA THAT PAUL MAKES TO THE CORINTHIANS IN CONCERN OF NOT RECEIVING THE GRACE OF GOD IN VAIN, V. 1B AND V. 2.**

****** SO WE'LL LOOK AT THE PARTNERSHIP AND PLEA UNDER THE TITLE OF "RECEIVING THE GRACE OF GOD IN VAIN."**

(10) AND WITH NO FURTHER INTRODUCTION, LOOK AT V. 1A PLEASE WHERE WE'LL SEE OUR FIRST POINT, THE PARTNERSHIP.

I. THE PARTNERSHIP, (READ V. 1A)

A. NOW THE NOBLEST VIEW OF SERVING JESUS CHRIST (WHICH ALL TRUE CHRISTIANS SHOULD WANT TO SERVE THEIR MASTER) IS TO SEE IT, THEIR SERVICE, AS WORKING TOGETHER IN PARTNERSHIP WITH GOD.

*** AND ALTHOUGH "WITH HIM" IS ITALICIZED IN THE NAS, THE NKJV AND KJV, INDICATING THAT "WITH HIM" IS NOT IN THE GREEK TEXT, ALL THE MAJOR TRANSLATIONS SUPPLY THIS TRUTH, THAT IT IS GOD PAUL WAS WORKING WITH, THAT HE WAS GOD'S PARTNER, GOD'S FELLOW WORKER.**

**** THE REASON BEING GOD IS THE OBJECT OF THE CONTEXT AS YOU GO BACK TO CHAPTER 5, VERSES 19-21.**

***** V. 19 – NAMELY, THAT GOD WAS IN CHRIST RECONCILING THE WORLD TO HIMSELF, NOT COUNTING THEIR TRESPASSES AGAINST THEM, AND HE HAS COMMITTED TO US THE WORD OF RECONCILIATION.**

V. 20 – THEREFORE, WE ARE AMBASSADORS FOR CHRIST, AS THOUGH GOD WERE MAKING AN APPEAL THROUGH US; WE BEG YOU ON BEHALF OF CHRIST, BE RECONCILED TO GOD.

V. 21 – HE MADE HIM WHO KNEW NO SIN TO BE SIN ON OUR BEHALF, SO THAT WE MIGHT BECOME THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD IN HIM.

****** SO GOD IS THE ANTECEDENT FROM VV. 19-21.**

1. SO PAUL TRULY WAS WORKING TOGETHER WITH GOD, A PARTNER WITH HIM IN HIS WORK. AND GOD'S WORK IN THIS CONTEXT FROM CHAPTER 5 IS HIS WORK OF RECONCILIATION, TO CALL PEOPLE TO BE RECONCILED TO GOD, THE MESSAGE OR WORD OF RECONCILIATION, PAUL WAS GOD'S AMBASSADOR, AS WELL AS US, WE THAT KNOW CHRIST, WE ARE GOD'S AMBASSADORS, CALLING PEOPLE TO BE RECONCILED TO GOD.

*** AND IT'S PRETTY AMAZING, THAT THE GOD WHO RECONCILES SINNERS, CONDESCENDS TO WORK THROUGH BELIEVERS TO PROCLAIM HIS GOSPEL OF RECONCILIATION.**

**** SO TO WHOM ARE WE CO-LABORERS, FELLOW-WORKERS, PARTNERS WITH IN MINISTRY IN SERVING CHRIST?**

***** GOD HIMSELF! WHAT A HIGH PRIVILEGE! WHAT AN HONOR!**

****** I MEAN THE TRUTH IS GOD AND HIS AMBASSADORS (US) ARE INVOLVED IN THE SAME GREAT ENTERPRISE, ALMOST AS THOUGH THE ALMIGHTY AND HIS SERVANTS ARE STANDING SHOULDER TO SHOULDER.**

2. WE ARE COLLEAGUES OF GOD IN MINISTRY, WITH HIM!

*** AND I THINK OF IT THIS WAY, JOHN MACARTHUR, R. C. SPROUL AND STEVE LAWSON HAVE BEEN USED BY THE LORD TO IMPACT MY LIFE FOR ETERNITY MORE THAN ANY OTHER PREACHERS OR TEACHERS OR WRITERS.**

**** AND IT WOULD BE A GREAT PRIVILEGE AND HONOR TO BE ASKED TO WORK SHOULDER TO SHOULDER WITH ANY OF THEM ON SOMETHING, TO BE ASKED TO WORK TOGETHER WITH THEM ON SOME CHRISTIAN PROJECT OR MISSION, TO BE A CO-LABORER WITH THEM. THAT**

WOULD BE FANTASTIC! (ALSO AS AN ENGINEER, AS A MUSICIAN, ETC.)

***** BUT HOW MUCH MORE OF A PRIVILEGE AND HONOR TO WORK SHOULDER TO SHOULDER WITH GOD EVERYDAY ON HIS MISSION, FOR HIS GLORY IN RECONCILING SINNERS!**

****** FOR JOHN MACARTHUR, R. C. SPROUL AND STEVE LAWSON ARE SPIRITUAL HEROES AND MENTORS, BUT MERE MEN.**

1. YET TO WORK WITH OUR CREATOR, OUR SAVIOR, OUR SUSTAINER, THAT IS A PRIVILEGE THAT IS BEYOND ANY OTHER.

*** AND THE REALITY IS, WE ARE GOD'S PARTNERS, WE ARE HIS CO-LABORERS, HIS SERVANTS AND HE WORKS WITH AND THROUGH US. HOW AWESOME IS THAT? AMAZING! IT'S STUNNING! IT DOESN'T GET ANY BETTER THAN THAT!**

**** IN I CORINTHIANS 3:9 PAUL SAID, "WE ARE GOD'S FELLOW WORKERS."**

***** SO THE TRUTH OF THE FIRST PART OF V. 1 IS PROFOUND, THE GOD OF GLORY CONDESCENDS TO WORK THROUGH BELIEVERS TO PROCLAIM HIS GOSPEL OF RECONCILIATION.**

****** WE ARE HIS PARTNERS WORKING TOGETHER WITH HIM. AND THAT IS OUR FIRST POINT FROM OUR TEXT, THE PARTNERSHIP WHICH LEADS US TO OUR 2'D POINT TODAY, THE PLEA. LOOK BACK AT V. 1 PLEASE.**

II. THE PLEA, (READ V. 1)

A. NOW AS WE MOVE ON IN V. 1, WE SEE THAT PAUL AND HIS CO-LABORERS, HIS CO-WORKERS, (WE) WILL MAKE A SOLEMN PLEA, TO THE CORINTHIANS.

*** AND WE SEE THEIR CONCERN, THEIR PASSION BY USING THE WORD “URGE” IN THE NAS AND NIV, “BESEECH” IN THE KJV, “PLEAD” IN THE NKJV AND “APPEAL” IN THE ESV.**

**** PAUL AND HIS CO-LABORERS ARE LITERALLY BEGGING, BESEECHING THE CORINTHIANS IN CONCERN FOR THEM.**

***** AND THIS GREEK VERB TRANSLATED URGE, BESEECH, PLEAD IS IN THE PRESENT TENSE AND REFLECTS PAUL'S CONSTANT CONCERN FOR THEM SPIRITUALLY.**

****** NOW SPECIFICALLY IN WHAT AREA IS PAUL CONSTANTLY CONCERNED FOR WITH THE CORINTHIANS?**

1. WELL, IT WAS NOT TO RECEIVE THE GRACE OF GOD IN VAIN.

**** AND THE GRACE OF GOD HERE IS TALKING ABOUT WHAT WAS PROCLAIMED IN THE MESSAGE OF RECONCILIATION, THE MESSAGE OF THE GOSPEL OF GRACE.**

**** PAUL HAD GIVEN THE CORINTHIANS THE MESSAGE OF THE GRACE OF GOD IN SALVATION, AS EMBODIED IN THE TRUTH OF THE GOSPEL OF GRACE. GRACE REFERS TO GOD'S RECONCILING WORK IN CHRIST.**

***** AND PAUL WAS CONCERNED, BURDENED, THAT THE CORINTHIANS NOT RECEIVE GOD'S GRACE IN REGARD TO SALVATION IN VAIN.**

****** AND THE GREEK ADJECTIVE "VAIN" AT THE END OF V. 1 LIT. MEANS EMPTY, DEVOID OF TRUTH, WITHOUT CONTENT, WITHOUT RESULT, USELESS.**

2. THE POINT BEING, PAUL'S BURDEN WAS THAT SOME OF THE CORINTHIANS HAD HEARD THE TRUTH OF THE GOSPEL, PROFESSED THAT THEY HAD BEEN RECONCILED BY GRACE, BUT ON ONE HAND WERE BEING LED ASTRAY BY A FALSE GOSPEL OF WORKS,

WHICH NULLIFIES GRACE AND FOR OTHERS THERE WERE NO FRUITS OF GOD'S GRACE, OF GOD'S GRACIOUS WORK OF SALVATION IN THEIR LIVES.

*** AND AS WE HAVE LEARNED IN THE FIVE CHAPTERS THAT WE HAVE ALREADY COVERED IN II CORINTHIANS, FALSE TEACHERS, JUDAIZERS, THOSE WHO PREACHED LAW AND WORKS HAD INFILTRATED THE CHURCH AND WERE LEADING PEOPLE ASTRAY.**

**** AND THOSE WHO BEGIN BY TRUSTING CHRIST, BUT THEN FALL AWAY TO ANOTHER MESSAGE, TO ANOTHER GOSPEL SHOW THAT THEIR QUOTE INITIAL RECEPTION OF GRACE, THOUGH IT MAY HAVE APPEARED GENUINE AT THE TIME, WAS NOT REAL, AND SO IN VAIN, WITHOUT RESULT, WITHOUT CONVERSION.**

***** TO SAY IT ANOTHER WAY, THE GRACE OF GOD THAT SENT PAUL WITH THE GOSPEL OF GRACE WAS IN DANGER OF BEING NULLIFIED.**

****** FOR THE PERSON WHO BELIEVES THAT THEY CAN EARN SALVATION BY THEIR OWN EFFORTS UNDERMINES THE VERY FOUNDATION OF CHRISTIAN GRACE AND NULLIFIES THE PRECIOUS DEATH OF CHRIST. IT NULLIFIES THE GRACE OF GOD BY DENYING THE NEED OF CHRIST'S DEATH.**

3. AND THIS WAS THE ISSUE THAT PAUL WAS CONCERNED WITH IN THE GALATIAN CHURCHES, QUOTE GALATIANS 2:21 AND GALATIANS 1:6-9.

*** NOW WORKS SALVATION IS ANOTHER GOSPEL, IT'S NOT THE GOSPEL OF GRACE, FOR WORKS NULLIFIES GRACE, KEEPING THE LAW FOR RECONCILIATION THWARTS GRACE, IT MAKES GRACE VOID, IT SETS GRACE ASIDE.**

**** FOR IF IT IS POSSIBLE TO BE RECONCILED TO GOD BY WORKS OR KEEPING THE LAW, THEN THERE WAS NO REASON FOR CHRIST TO DIE, HIS DEATH WAS POINTLESS, HIS WORK WAS IN VAIN, HIS CROSS WAS UNNECESSARY, IF LAW OR WORKS COULD SAVE US.**

***** AND PAUL'S CONCERN FOR THE CORINTHIANS IS BASICALLY THE SAME CONCERN THAT HE HAS FOR THE GALATIANS.**

****** NOT TO BELIEVE IN VAIN, NOT TO RECEIVE THE GRACE OF GOD IN VAIN. AND WE KNOW THIS IS TRUE EVEN BEYOND THE CONTEXT WE ARE IN TODAY, FOR AS I SAID IN MY INTRODUCTION, PAUL SAID TO THE CORINTHIANS IN HIS FIRST INSPIRED LETTER THESE WORDS IN I CORINTHIANS 15:1&2 (QUOTE THEM) (BELIEVING IN VAIN IS A NON SAVING BELIEF, DEMON FAITH, JAMES 2:19)**

4. THEN AS PAUL CLOSES OUT HIS SECOND LETTER TO THE CORINTHIANS HE SAYS IN THE LAST CHAPTER, IN II CORINTHIANS 13:5 (QUOTE IT).

*** NOW AFTER EXAMINING ONESELF, AFTER TESTING ONESELF, THERE ARE THOSE WHO REALIZE THAT THEY HAVE FAILED THE TEST OF TRUE FAITH, IT'S NOT THAT THEY LOST THEIR FAITH, ITS THEY NEVER HAD IT.**

**** AND THOSE IN THE CORINTHIAN CHURCH WHO OUTWARDLY EMBRACED GRACE BUT TURNED TO WORKS SHOWED THEY NEVER HAD IT AND IN THAT SENSE RECEIVED THE GRACE OF GOD IN VAIN.**

***** AND THOSE IN THE CHURCH WHO WERE NOT REGENERATE WERE IN GRAVE DANGER OF REMAINING THAT WAY, BY BEING DECEIVED BY THE FALSE TEACHERS.**

****** AND TO FOLLOW THOSE PRACTICING ANOTHER GOSPEL WOULD LEAD TO WASTE OF THEIR PRIVILEGE AND TO SPIRITUAL RUIN.**

5. SO TO STRESS THE URGENCY OF THIS SITUATION, PAUL SAYS WHAT HE DOES IN II CORINTHIANS 6:2. LOOK AT V. 2 PLEASE.

B. READ V. 2. NOW II CORINTHIANS 6:2 IS A QUOTATION FROM ISAIAH 49:8 WHICH SAYS: THUS SAYS THE LORD, “IN A FAVORABLE TIME I HAVE ANSWERED YOU, AND IN A DAY OF SALVATION I HAVE HELPED YOU; AND I WILL KEEP YOU AND GIVE YOU FOR A COVENANT OF THE PEOPLE, TO RESTORE THE LAND, TO MAKE THEM INHERIT THE DESOLATE HERITAGES.”

*** NOW PAUL USES THIS QUOTATION FROM ISAIAH 49:8 TO STRESS THE URGENCY OF THE TIME THAT THE CORINTHIANS ARE NOW LIVING IN.**

**** SO PAUL BEGINS IN V. 2 WITH THESE WORDS, “FOR HE SAYS” MAKING REFERENCE TO WHAT THE PROPHET ISAIAH SAID.**

***** NOW IN THE CONTEXT OF ISAIAH 49:8, THE ACCEPTABLE TIME, THE TIME OF GOD’S FAVOR-GRACE, WAS WHEN GOD MERCIFULLY ANSWERED PRAYER AND ACTED FOR ISRAEL’S SALVATION.**

****** IT REFERRED TO A FUTURE TIME OF ISRAEL’S RELEASE FROM EXILE IN BABYLON, BEING SAVED OUT OF BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY.**

1. AND IN ESSENCE, THE PROPHET ISAIAH PREDICTED A TIME OF GOD’S FAVOR – A TIME OF GOD’S OWN CHOOSING, WHEN HE WOULD SAVE HIS PEOPLE, THAT

GOD WOULD RELEASE THEM FROM BONDAGE AND CLEAR A PATH FOR THEM TO RETURN TO THEIR LAND. GOD WOULD SAVE HIS PEOPLE.

*** WELL, PAUL, IN APPLICATION OF ISAIAH 49:8 IS ANNOUNCING GOD'S FINAL DELIVERANCE AND WARNING OF THE CONSEQUENCES OF TURNING FROM IT.**

**** BUT UNLIKE ISAIAH, AT THAT TIME, GOD'S DELIVERANCE, THEIR SALVATION FROM BONDAGE WAS STILL TO COME. BUT PAUL ANNOUNCED, THE DAY OF SALVATION HAD ARRIVED, THE AGE OF GRACE, THE GOSPEL ERA WAS THE TIME THAT THEY (THE CORINTHIANS WERE NOW LIVING IN).**

***** SO PAUL IN II CORINTHIANS 6:2, AFTER HE QUOTES ISAIAH 49:8, PROVIDES APPLICATION OF THAT TEXT TO THE CORINTHIANS DAY AND SAYS: A GREATER DAY IS HERE, FOR THE DAY OF SALVATION NOW GOES BEYOND ISRAEL BEING DELIVERED FROM CAPTIVITY TO BABYLON, TO THE DELIVERANCE FROM SIN'S CAPTIVITY THROUGH JESUS CHRIST.**

****** AND THE ACCEPTABLE TIME, THE TIME OF GOD'S FAVOR AND GRACE AND SALVATION IS NOW.**

2. NOW WE ARE LIVING IN THE GOSPEL OF GRACE ERA. IN LIGHT OF THAT THE CORINTHIANS WERE TO SEIZE THE DAY, FOR TO BECOME ACCEPTABLE TO GOD, ONE MUST RECEIVE GOD'S OFFER OF RECONCILIATION.

*** YET HEARING THE MESSAGE DOES NOT GUARANTEE DELIVERANCE, IT MUST BE RECEIVED.**

**** NOW IS THE DAY OF SALVATION, THE DAY OF RECONCILIATION, SO DON'T LET IT PASS BY. NOW YOU ARE LIVING IN THE TIME OF ACCEPTANCE, IN A TIME OF GRACE. DON'T RECEIVE THE GRACE OF GOD IN VAIN BY A FALSE PROFESSION.**

LET ME REPEAT. PAUL'S COMMENT ON ISAIAH 49:8 CONSISTS OF AN URGENT SUMMONS APPLIED TO THE CORINTHIANS TO EMBRACE THE GRACE OF GOD IN SALVATION IN THE PERIOD APPOINTED BY GOD FOR ITS ACCEPTANCE.

****** PAUL THEREBY LETS THE CORINTHIANS KNOW THAT THE PRIVILEGE OF LIVING IN SUCH A DAY OF GOSPEL OPPORTUNITY ALSO LAYS UPON THEM THE SOLEMN RESPONSIBILITY OF SEEING THAT THEY DO NOT RECEIVE THE GRACE OF GOD IN VAIN.**

3. IT IS TO SAY, KNOWING THE URGENCY OF THE TIMES, A TIME OF GRACE, A TIME OF GOSPEL ERA, PAUL PLEADED WITH THE CORINTHIANS NOT TO LET GOD'S GRACE IN THEIR LIVES BE IN VAIN.

*** NOW IS THE ACCEPTABLE TIME, NOW IS THE DAY OF SALVATION.**

IN WRAP UP: (1) THE DAY OF GOSPEL OPPORTUNITY ENDS AT DEATH AND ESCHATOLOGICALLY FOR THOSE WHOM HAVE HEARD OF THE GOSPEL OF GRACE AT THE RETURN OF CHRIST.

*** AND OUR TEXT TODAY COMMUNICATES URGENCY. PAUL PLEADS WITH HIS READERS TO BE RECONCILED TO GOD AND EXHORTS THEM TO RECEIVE GOD'S MESSAGE OF SALVATION BY GRACE NOW.**

**** AND PAUL UTTERED THE SAME APPEAL TO THE ATHENIAN PHILOSOPHERS IN ACTS 17:30 WHERE HE SAID: (QUOTE IT).**

***** AND THE URGENCY OF REPENTANCE IS DUE TO THE TIME LIMIT THAT GOD HAS SET IN HIS PURPOSE AND PLAN, TO WHAT HE HAS ORDAINED.**

****** AND FOR US, THAT LIMIT BEGINS AT THE TIME THE GOOD NEWS OF RECONCILIATION IS HEARD AND ENDS WHEN WE DIE OR JESUS RETURNS.**

******* AND GOD HAS SOVEREIGNLY SET THE DATE OF OUR DEPARTURE AND WHEN JESUS WILL RETURN, SO WE NEED TO BE READY. QUOTE HEBREWS 9:27 AND MATTHEW 24:44.**

(2) AND FOLKS THE CALL TO REPENTANCE GOES FORTH WITH LIMITS GOD HAS SET FOR US. SO THE APPLICATION IS, IF YOU HAVE NOT BEEN RECONCILED TO GOD, TURN FROM YOUR SIN IN REPENTANT FAITH TO JESUS CHRIST TODAY.

*** DON'T HEAR THE TRUTH, NOMINALLY INTELLECTUALLY ACCEPT IT, BUT NOT BE TRULY SAVED, DON'T RECEIVE THE GRACE OF GOD IN VAIN WITH AN OUTWARD PROFESSION BUT NO INWARD CHANGE OR BE LED ASTRAY BY THE FALSE GOSPEL OF WORKS.**

**** NOW IS THE ACCEPTED TIME, NOW WE ARE LIVING IN THE DAY THAT GOD SAVES SINNERS, THAT GOD RECONCILES SINNERS THROUGH JESUS CHRIST ALONE. TURN TO JESUS CHRIST TODAY.**

***** AND THEN LASTLY, TRUE BELIEVER, ALWAYS REMEMBER OUR WORK IN SERVICE IS NEVER IN VAIN FOR THE LORD, AND WE ARE WORKERS TOGETHER WITH HIM, WE ARE IN PARTNERSHIP WITH HIM. WORK THE**

**WORKS FOR CHRIST WHILE IT IS DAY. (QUOTE JOHN 9:4
AND PRAY)**