

Misunderstanding Grace [What It Is *Not!*]:

"This argument," wrote Godet, "has always been sought to justify the greatest crimes in history by representing the advantages in which they have resulted to the cause of humanity."

When grace as a free gift from God is misunderstood, it becomes

1. A **self-justifying** principle. It concludes that no matter what evil man proposes or acts upon, God's grace, His faithfulness, guarantees a good end. Bonhoeffer pointed out that Grace is free but not cheap!
 - As Godet reminded us: This argument "has always been sought to justify the greatest crimes in history by representing the advantages in which they have resulted to the cause of humanity."
 - If the "end justifies the means" and that end is beneficial or good, does it matter if the "means" requires disobeying God? If God works all things for the good [Romans 8:28] or , as with Joseph of old, "what man intended for evil, God purposed for good" [Genesis 50:20]—if these be so—is it just or right for God to judge? If He created the Torah only to accuse us of an evil, of what by nature we had become, have we not made Him more glorious by contrast? Why His wrath then?
 - **Romans 3:8** you falsely imagine I am saying, "Let's do evil things that good things may come of it."
 - **Romans 8:28**, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose" supposing that their now success and good fortune is God's approval to whatever they did. Grace becomes a divine entitlement, a right of passage through life, no matter how they live. This was never Paul's understanding.
2. A **positional** salvation. Still sinning but saved.
 - The **sylogism** went this way: When we sin, God shows mercy. When God shows mercy He is fulfilling His Covenant with us Therefore, let's sin so that God can be faithful.
 - **Romans 3:5** "If our breaking God's Law proves God's covenantal faithfulness, what are we saying: Is God unjust to bring down His wrath [when He gets furious with us]! I am using your reasoning." "It is from the depths of the human conscience that the apostle fetches his question." - Godet
 - **Lange** remarked, "The covenant of God is always perfect according to its stage of development. If it generally fails to become apparent, the fault always turns out to be man's. The covenant of God is surely no *contrat social*! [social contract]—no agreement between equal parties. It is the free institution of God's grace. But this institution is that of a true covenant, of a personal and ethical mutual relation.
3. A tinge of **favoritism** still lingers:
 - God has not cast away His people, Israel. [Romans 3:1; 11:1] but God is no respecter of persons [Acts 10:34]. The **simplicity** of God reconciles Mercy and Judgment.
 - When works precede grace or grace precedes work instead of following: "**Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.**" [Philippians 2:12-13] Our out working and God's work are like faith and faithfulness- together.
 - David confessed his sin in **covenant language** because his covenant was with God alone, "Against You, You only, have I sinned, And done this evil in Your sight—That You may be found just when You speak, And blameless when You judge [Psalm 51:4].

4. God's faithfulness, in His grace, is **independent** of my sinning. He saved me, in spite of myself.
 - The **Aseity** of God: 2 Timothy 2:13 "If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself." Ps 115:3 "Our God is in heaven and does whatever he pleases."
 - **Romans 3:3-5** God remains fair. "But what if they were unfaithful does their unfaithfulness make God's faithfulness [covenant] of no use-meaningless? No, never! Let God be truthful and every man a liar, as it is written, in order that you, Lord, might be justified in all You say and acknowledged [proven] right [faithful, just] in every thing you decide. If our breaking God's Law proves God's covenantal faithfulness, what are we saying: Is God unjust to bring down His wrath [when He gets furious with us]! I am using your reasoning. No! Never! Since, if that were the case, [if our unfaithfulness proves His faithfulness] how could He [rightly] judge the world? "No final judgment is any longer possible if the beneficial consequences of sin, human or Jewish, justify the sinner." - Godet
5. Grace **abrogates** Law: A legalistic view of Torah.
 - Is it fair to say, "If good happens, it is God's grace; if evil, it is man's fault." One scholar, Professor Meyer concludes this is saying, "...the Christians converted the Gentile world to Monotheism, by betraying and corrupting the [old] covenant of the Jews."
 - **Romans 3:20** By the law is the knowledge of sin.
 - **Romans 3:10** There is none righteous, no, not one; -

Conclusion: Romans 2:27-31 Where, then, is boasting; It is denied. By what rule? Works? No! But by the law of faith. for we reason a man to be justified is so by trusting God without obeying some law. Is He just Israel's God? And not also the God of everyone, yes! Every nation!, Truly, and undoubtedly, God alone is He who justifies the Jew [circumcised] from [by] faith and the Gentile [uncircumcised] through this ['same'] faith. We, therefore, abolish the law through faith? Never! But we do prove it important [establish it]. We maintain that God's Old Covenant was **never abrogated, repealed, avoided, or discarded**. On Calvary the Law was honored and fulfilled [Matthew 5:17] and now, since it is rewritten upon our hearts, it is vindicated [Romans 8:4].