

Introduction

Part 6

The grace of God in the Torah
and throughout Scripture

According to the Scriptures, we know the Lord God of Israel as “*Our Father who is in heaven.*” David wrote in the psalms (10:14) praising the God of Israel as a loving Father saying, He is the “*Father of the fatherless and protector of widows is God in his holy habitation.*” Hosea wrote (14:3) that the fatherless find compassion and mercy in Him alluding to the Lord God of Israel as “*Our loving Father.*” David wrote, “*When my father and my mother forsake me, then the LORD will take me up.*” (Tehillim / Psalm 27:10) Based upon these Scriptures, the Lord is clearly known and understood as a loving Father according to the Tanach. A good earthly father disciplines his children, and so does our Father in heaven (Mishley / Proverbs 3:11, Hebrews 12:5-7). The purpose of God’s discipline is to lead us to perform Teshuvah (repentance) for our own ultimate good (Romans 2:4). When one repents and turns from his evil ways, he is demonstrating his willingness to turn from sin and to conform his life, with the help of the Spirit of God, unto the ways of the Lord God of Israel. According to the Torah, the way of the Lord is to do acts of charity and justice (Bereshit / Genesis 18:19, יט כי ידעתיו למען אשר יצוה את-בניו ואת-ביתו אהריו ושמרו דרו)

יְהוָה לַעֲשׂוֹת צְדָקָה וּמִשְׁפָּט לְמַעַן הָבִיא יְהוָה עַל-אַבְרָהָם אֵת אֲשֶׁר-דִּבֶּר (עֲלֵיו): The Torah commands us to give generously to the poor. *“You shall freely open your hand to your brother, to your needy and poor in your land” (Devarim / Deuteronomy 15:11)*. Because of this, Yeshua the Messiah taught frequently about giving to the poor and encouraged His followers to do the same. As disciples of Yeshua, we should be distinguished as the most generous people on earth. Note that when Paul received permission from the apostles to take the gospel to the Gentiles, the apostles gave him only one stipulation. They asked him to teach the Gentiles *“to remember the poor” (Galatians 2:10)*. This is known as the *“straight way”* or the *“narrow path”* that leads to life as Yeshua described in *Matthew 7:14-16*. The Lord God of Israel is *“Tov v’yashar”* (good and upright), and therefore He teaches His children to do the same, to be *yesharim* (יִשְׂרָיִם), meaning to walk upright.

The Lord teaching his children to be upright means that He has given us His word to educate us by imparting to us both moral and spiritual truths. This is why David wrote in his Psalm saying, *“Happy is the one who delights in the Torah of the Lord and meditates upon it day and night” (Tehillim / Psalms 1:1-2, אֲנֹשֵׁי-הָאֱלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר לֹא הָלְךְ בַּעֲצָת, אֲנֹשֵׁי וּבְדַרְךְ חֲטָאִים לֹא עָמְדוּ וּבְמוֹשֵׁב לְצִיִּים לֹא יָשָׁב: ב פִּי אִם-בְּתוֹרַת יְהוָה חִפְצוֹ וּבְתוֹרָתוֹ יִהְיֶה יוֹמָם וּלְיַלְלָה:)* As the followers of Yeshua the Messiah, we also should likewise delight, love, and study the Torah. During Yeshua’s ministry he studied Torah and taught us to keep the commands of the Lord (*Luke 4:16, Matthew 7:12*). He affirmed the central teaching of the Torah, the Shema, and stated our duty above all else is to love our Father in heaven (*Deuteronomy 6:4-6, Mark 12:29*), teaching that the *“New Covenant”* promises the Torah would be written upon our hearts (*Jeremiah 31:31-33, Matthew 26:28*). This is a description of the Lord empowering His people to live according to His word. The reasons why the Torah was such a central part of Yeshua’s teaching, may be summarized as *“the grace of God is demonstrated throughout all of Scripture.”* The rabbis have a similar interpretation saying that beginning with the Torah we see and expectantly hope for the grace of God each day of our lives. According to the *Talmud Bavli Sota 14a*, the rabbis say that *“the Torah begins and ends with the grace of God.”*

Talmud Bavli Sota 14a

*And Rabbi Chama the son of Rabbi Chanina said, (דברים יג, ה) אחרי מאי דכתיב (ה' אלהיכם תלכו וכי אפשר לו לאדם להלך אחר שכינה ה' "What is the meaning of the verse, 'After Hashem, your G-d, shall you walk (Deuteronomy 13:5)')? Is it possible for a man to walk after the divine presence? והלא כבר נאמר (דברים ד, כד) כי ה' אלהיך אש אוכלה הוא (דברים ד, כד) כי ה' אלהיך אש אוכלה הוא And isn't it already stated, 'For Hashem your G-d is a consuming fire (Deuteronomy 4:24)')? Rather, להלך Rather, אלא *To follow the character traits of G-d. (בראשית ג, כא) מה הוא מלביש ערומים דכתיב (בראשית ג, כא) ויעש ה' אלהים לאדם ולאשתו כתנות עור וילבישם אף אתה הלבש ערומים הקב"ה ביקר חולים דכתיב (בראשית יח, א) וירא אליו ה' באלוני ממרא אף אתה בקר חולים הקב"ה ניחם אבלים דכתיב (בראשית כה, יא) ויהי אחרי מות אברהם ויברך אלהים את יצחק בנו אף אתה נחם אב-לים הקב"ה קבר מתים דכתיב (דברים לד, ו) ויקבר אותו *Just as he clothes the naked, as it is written, 'And the Lord G-d made for Adam and his wife cloaks of leather, and he clothed them (Genesis 3:21);' so too you shall clothe the naked. The Holy One, Blessed be He, visited the sick, as it is written, 'And he appeared in Ailonei Mamrei [while Abraam was in pain] (Genesis 18:1);' so too you shall visit the sick. The Holy One, Blessed be He, comforted mourners, as it is written, 'And it was, after the death of Abraham, and G-d blessed his son Isaac (Genesis 25:11);' so too you shall comfort mourners. The Holy One, Blessed be He, buried the dead, as it is written, 'And he buried him in the valley (Deuteronomy 34:6);' so too, you shall bury the dead.*" כתנות עור *Cloaks of leather (alt. skin)-* רב חזד אמר *[It is an argument of] Rav and Shmuel.* ושמואל**

One said, דבר הבא מן העור וחד אמר “Something that comes from leather.” The other one said, דבר שהעור נהנה ממנו “Something that the skin benefits from.” דרש תורה תחלתה גמייר, ר’ שמלאי Rabbi Simlai expounded, לות חסדים וסופה גמילות חסדים תחיל- The Torah begins with loving-kindness and ends with loving kindness. תה גמילות חסדים דכתיב ויעש ה’ אלהים לאדם ולאשתו כתנות עור וילבישם וסופה גמילות חסדים דכתיב ויקבר אותו בגיא It begins with loving kindness, as it is written (Genesis 3:21), “And God made for Adam and his wife coats of skin, and he dressed them.” It ends with loving kindness, as it is written (Deuteronomy 34:6), and He buried him in a valley.”

Now if we consider this interpretation regarding the grace of God and the Torah, how are we to understand these words in the sense of the secessionists and modern theologies that teach the ceasing of the sacrifices because of Yeshua the Messiah in the New Covenant? In *Matthew 5:19*, Yeshua said that He had come to fulfill the Torah commands, even to the “least” of these, making a distinction on the nuances (the minutia) found within the Torah on what the Lord expects of His people. In Yeshua’s statement he was saying the commands are to be put into practice, even to the least, or the lowliest of the commands. The Torah directs our attention forward to the coming of the Messiah, and in His fulfilling of God’s commands. This fulfilling is not a cessation of the command, but is His demonstration by example, His establishing a continuity for His followers to walk in the manner that He walked. Yeshua said in *John 13:15* that He has set the example for us. The true direction to which the Torah points is that it is to be obeyed, and therefore these words of Yeshua directs our lives to be in conformity to Yeshua’s teachings which were Torah based, as the Lord God of Israel is seeking for us to live in righteousness, holiness, justice, and truth in the world that He has created on both the inside and the outside. Remember, the dualism we were created for the point of bringing glory to the Name of God by the physical and spiritual realities of our faith. We are to live our faith! Our motivation is to be out of our love

for God, which is based upon a work of the Lord in our hearts to seek and to serve Him. In addition, we do not want to live as the nations in opposition to God's Torah as we have been studying in the previous studies. (see *Parashat Ekev, 1 Maccabees 1, and Part 1-5*)

In *Tehillim / Psalms 101:1-8*, the Psalm opens saying, אָ לְדוֹד מִזֶּ- : יהוה אֲשֵׁרָה לְךָ יְהוָה אֲזַמְרָה: *A Psalm of David 101:1 I will sing of lovingkindness and justice, To You, O Lord, I will sing praises. (NASB)* From antiquity, David speaks of singing of the grace of God (הַסְדָּה, *lovingkindness, grace and mercy are all equivalent based upon this word*). Modern theologies today take the position that the God of the Tanach (Old Testament) has undergone a sort of transformation through time in regard to differing modes of behavior. Dispensationalism, a religious interpretive theology for the Bible considers Biblical history as divided deliberately by God into defined periods or ages to each of which the Lord has allotted distinctive administrative principles. According to dispensationalist interpretation, each age of the plan of God is therefore administered in a certain way, and humanity is held responsible as a steward during each particular time frame he finds himself living in. This mode of thought is another consequence of the thousands of years of anti-Torah and anti-Semitic theologies, and the theologians attempts to balance the biblical view of Israel in relation to the church, which is believed to be something *“new.”* The basic premise of the Church is that the Law has passed away with the birth of the Church at Pentacost (*the festival of Shavuot, feast of weeks*). The major presupposition is the Lord God of Israel does not function in the same manner as He has done throughout history following the event of Pentacost. As a result, the NT descriptions of the Lord God are described as *“full of grace”* at the pulpit teaching this is in opposition to the God of the OT as being *“mean, vengeful, requiring works for salvation, etc.”* However, when we study Torah, it becomes clear the grace of God has been demonstrated from the very beginning with Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, etc. For example, when Moshe received the Torah on the mountain of Sinai, the Scriptures state:

Shemot / Exodus 34:6

34:6 Then the Lord passed by in front of him and proclaimed, ‘The Lord, the Lord God, compassionate and



gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness (grace) and truth; (NASB, וַיַּעֲבֹר יְהוָה | עַל-פְּנָיו וַיִּקְרָא יְהוָה | יְהוָה אֵל רַחוּם וְחַנּוּן אַרְךָ אַפַּיִם וְרַב-חֶסֶד וְאֱמֶת:)

Here at a pivotal point in the Torah, the Lord describes himself in terms of mercy and grace. It is for this reason the psalmist also describes the Lord God as merciful and gracious according to *Tehillim / Psalms 103:8*, “*The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.*” In addition, David claims in *Tehillim / Psalms 19:1-8* of the Torah of God as being restorative to the soul:

Tehillim / Psalms 19:1-8

19:1 The heavens are telling of the glory of God; And their expanse is declaring the work of His hands. 19:2 Day to day pours forth speech, And night to night reveals knowledge. 19:3 There is no speech, nor are there words; Their voice is not heard. 19:4 Their line has gone out through all the earth, And their utterances to the end of the world. In them He has placed a tent for the sun, 19:5 Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber; It rejoices as a strong man to run his course. 19:6 Its rising is from one end of the heavens, And its circuit to the other end of them; And there is nothing hidden from its heat. 19:7 The law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul; The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. 19:8 The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. (NASB)

The psalmist is alluding to *Shemot / Exodus 34:6*, and knows his listeners will recognize the Scriptures from the Torah. Considering the Scriptural descriptions of the grace of God in the Tanach, it is interesting to take note how the English translations of the Tanach tend to always translate the word חֶסֶד as “*lovingkindness*” in the Tanach, as opposed to “*grace*” in the Apostolic Writings. This becomes very obvious in the Hebrew translation of the NT where חֶסֶד is always trans-

lated as “*grace*” and never translated as “*lovingkindness.*” The writings of Paul to the Ephesians illustrates this point. *Ephesians 1:1-14* are quoted here to provide the context in the Hebrew translation of the Greek text as always translating “*grace*” using the word **חֶסֶד**.

Ephesians 1:1-14

1:1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, To the saints who are at Ephesus and who are faithful in Christ Jesus: 1:2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, 1:4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love 1:5 He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, 1:6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. 1:7 In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace 1:8 which He lavished on us. In all wisdom and insight 1:9 He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him 1:10 with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, that is the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth. In Him 1:11 also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will, 1:12 to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ would be to the praise of His glory. 1:13 In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, 1:14 who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory. (NASB)

א פולוס נְשָׁלַיְחָ יֵשׁוּעַ הַמָּשִׁיחַ בְּרִצּוֹן אֱלֹהִים אֶל־הַקְּדוֹשִׁים
 בְּאֶפְסוֹס וְאֶל־אֲשֶׁר נֶאֱמַן לְבָם לְפָנַי יֵשׁוּעַ הַמָּשִׁיחַ: ב חֶסֶד
 וְשָׁלוֹם יִתֵּן לְכֶם אֱלֹהִים אָבִינוּ וַיֵּשׁוּעַ הַמָּשִׁיחַ אֲדִינִינוּ: ג בְּרוּךְ
 הוּא הָאֱלֹהִים אָבִי אֲדִינִינוּ יֵשׁוּעַ הַמָּשִׁיחַ אֲשֶׁר בֵּרַךְ אֶתְנוּ מִשְׁמֵי
 מְעוֹנוֹ בְּכָל־בְּרִכַת הַנֶּפֶשׁ בַּמָּשִׁיחַ: ד כְּאֲשֶׁר בּוֹ בְחָרְנוּ עַד לֹא
 נִוְסְדָה אֶרֶץ לְהִיּוֹת קְדוֹשִׁים וְתַמִּימִים לְפָנָיו: ה וּבְאֶהְבְּתוּ יַעֲ-
 דְנוּ מִרֹאשׁ לְהִיּוֹת לוֹ לְבָנִים עַל־יְדֵי יֵשׁוּעַ הַמָּשִׁיחַ כְּחֶפֶץ לְבוֹ
 הַטּוֹב: ו לְתַפְאֶרֶת עֵז חֶסֶדוֹ אֲשֶׁר־גָּמַל עָלֵינוּ בִּידִידוֹ: ז כִּי־בוֹ
 נִמְצָא פְדוּת וּסְלִיחָה לְחַטָּאתֵינוּ בְּדַמּוֹ הַשָּׁפוּךְ כְּהַמּוֹן חֶסְדָיו:
 ח אֲשֶׁר הִרְבָּה עָלֵינוּ בְּכָל־חֻכְמָה וּבִינָה: ט וַיִּוְדַע לָנוּ אֶת־סוּד
 רִצּוֹנוֹ כַּעֲצַתוֹ הַטּוֹבָה הַיְעוּצָה בְּלִבּוֹ מִקֶּדֶם: י לְקַבֵּץ בַּמָּשִׁיחַ
 בְּמִלֵּאת יְמֵי הַפְּקָדָה כֹּל אֲשֶׁר בְּשָׂמַיִם וְכֹל אֲשֶׁר בָּאָרֶץ וְהָיוּ
 בוֹ לְאַחֲדִים: יא וְגַם עַל־יְדוֹ נִחְזִיק בַּמּוֹרֶשֶׁה כְּאֲשֶׁר נִבְחָרְנוּ
 לָהּ מֵאִז מִטַּעַם הָעֲשָׂה כֹּל כַּעֲצַת חֶפְצוֹ: יב לְמַעַן יֵרָאֶה עָלֵינוּ
 הַזֶּר כְּבוֹדוֹ בְּהִיּוֹת אֲנַחְנוּ הָרִאשׁוֹנִים אֲשֶׁר בְּטַחְנוּ בַּמָּשִׁיחַ: יג
 וּבוֹ בְטָחִים גַּם־אַתֶּם אַחֲרָי אֲשֶׁר שְׂמַעְתֶּם אֶת־דְּבַר הָאֱמֶת
 אֶת־דְּבַר הַבְּשָׂרָה לְתַשׁוּעַתְכֶם וְכֹאֲשֶׁר הָאֱמַנְתֶּם בוֹ כֵּן גַּם־
 נַחְתְּמִים אַתֶּם בְּרוּחַ הַקֹּדֶשׁ כְּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר: יד אֲשֶׁר עֲרַבּוֹן הוּא
 לְמוֹרֶשֶׁתְנוּ עַד אֲשֶׁר־תִּגָּאֵל וְהִתְהַלְּנוּ לְאַחֲזָה לְתַהֲלַת שֵׁם
 כְּבוֹדוֹ:

This is a significant observation which connects the grace of God, the חֶסֶד “*lovingkindness*” of God from the Torah to the Messiah. This connection is possible by having a thorough understanding of the MT without the modern presupposition of “*no grace before Yeshua.*” These Scriptures demonstrate for us the grace of God is found in the Torah and throughout all of the Tanach. This illustrates again how theology permeates everything we believe. Our presuppositions, the theologies we have been taught from youth up inexplicably enter into our understanding of God’s word and how the Word of God applies to our lives. Examining the English translation on grace, we are able to observe how theology enters into the translation of the Scriptures, and therefore we must not only know our bibles, but also to use multiple translations

in order to recognize these things. For example, look at the degree of variation between the different English translations of the Hebrew text from *Shemot / Exodus 34:6*. The variation provides us with a sense on the meaning of the word **רַחוּם** and how our understanding of “*grace*” based upon this study is not a matter of question.

Translations of Shemot / Exodus 34:6

New International Version

And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, “The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness,

New Living Translation

The LORD passed in front of Moses, calling out, “Yahweh! The LORD! The God of compassion and mercy! I am slow to anger and filled with unfailing love and faithfulness.

English Standard Version

The LORD passed before him and proclaimed, “The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness,

New American Standard Bible

Then the LORD passed by in front of him and proclaimed, “The LORD, the LORD God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth;

King James Bible

And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth,

Holman Christian Standard Bible

Then the LORD passed in front of him and proclaimed: Yahweh--Yahweh is a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger and rich in faithful love and truth,

International Standard Version

The LORD passed in front of him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and filled with gracious love and truth.

Looking at Ginsburgs MT in his Marginal Mesorah on this verse, the various MSS do not show any textual variation on the word **חֶסֶד** in the Torah (*Shemot / Exodus 34:6*), however, there is a large degree of variation in the English translations. How might this have happened? The variations on the English translations enable us to summarize the meaning of God's **chesed** (**חֶסֶד**) as being His abounding love, unending love, steadfast love, His lovingkindness, His abundant goodness, and His gracious love. The English translations do not explicitly state that this is the "*grace*" of God, but provides descriptions of what God's grace means for His people. The grace of God is apparent throughout the Tanach demonstrated by His love for His people Israel.

While the grace of God is apparent in the MT, one cannot escape the warnings of a future time of recompense and judgment which appear throughout the Apostolic Writings and not just in the Old Testament. The New Testament therefore is not exclusively a book of mercy and grace as some would suggest, but warns the children of God of the coming judgment and wrath of God. This judgment will come as a result of wrong doing, and disregarding the commands of God (see *Matthew 7*). The tragic result of modern theologies, the average Christian does not expect to find grace in the Torah but only harsh and cruel judgment. And in the New Testament, the average Christian does not expect to find Judgment and wrath but only grace and love. Are modern theologies setting up God's people for an unexpected rebuke at the judgment throne? Note the significance of Teshuvah (Repentance) for the life of a believer, without Teshuvah there is no hope of forgiveness of sins. Teshuvah is the act of repentance, both on a spiritual and physical level, where one repents and turns from his sins. Modern theologies

however teach “*just come as you are.*” In the words of Yeshua, there are more references to the fires of eternal punishment than in any part of the Scriptures. The Lord God of Israel is described throughout the Scriptures as the creator God who is unchanging and how there will come a day when everyone (both the righteous and the wicked) will bow in obedience to Him. Each individual is responsible to God for his or her actions and Paul states that each person will give an account before the judgment seat (*Romans 14:10*).

Modern theologies teach that the mainstay of Judaism is legalism which is coupled with a misrepresentation of the Torah as preaching a “*save yourself by your own good works gospel.*” This is nothing less than a spin on the truth and a continuing contribution to the anti-Semitism with a distorted view of the Jewish faith during the first century period. By having a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures and a working knowledge of the Hebrew texts and the rabbinic literature, the Judaism in the first century period was not a salvation by works faith. Most of the Jewish teachers and rabbis of the time belonged to the sect of the Pharisees, the sect that has led to modern rabbinic Judaism in the following centuries, which taught of God’s goodness and willingness to accept all sinners who were willing to repent and turn from their evil ways. Yeshua had issue with the hypocrisy of the time and not the Torah teaching of the rabbis. E.P. Sanders in his book titled “*Paul and Palestinian Judaism*” wrote saying:

The theme of mercy - whether put in terms of God’s mercy in electing Israel, God’s mercy in accepting repentant sinners (repentance does not earn a reward, but is responded to by God in mercy), or God’s ‘rewarding’ the righteous because of his mercy - serves to assure that election and ultimately salvation cannot be earned, but depend on God’s grace. One can never be righteous enough to be worthy in God’s sight of the ultimate gifts, which depend only on his mercy.

The Message of divine compassion is strong in the minds of the Jewish religious teachers from the time of the New Testament, just as we find in the later writings of the rabbis according to *Metzudat David on*



psalm 100:5.

Metzudat David on psalm 100:5

לעולם חסדו . חסד ה' הוא דבר המתקיים עד עולם ולא
כן חסד ב"ו : אמונתו . האמנת הבטחתו קיימת עד כלות
כל הדורות :

Forever His grace. God's grace is something that exists forever and yes kindness B"O: faith Believed in its promise exists for all possible ages. (my translation)

The abbreviation ב"ו (בו' קצוות, b'vav k'tzavot) means “*the six directions [right, left, front, up, down, back],*” and Kabbalistically it means “*in the six extremities; indicating chesed, gevurah, tiferet, netzach, hod, and yesod.*” The kabbalistic approach draws together all of the Jewish concepts of grace as it is connected to this physical world and as being the very foundation (sod) of who the God of Israel is at His very core. The grace of God is a prominent feature in Jewish theology just as Ben Sira emphasized saying the following:

Sirach 2:10-12

2:10 Think back to the ancient generations and consider this: has the Lord ever disappointed anyone who put his hope in him? Has the Lord ever abandoned anyone who held him in constant reverence? Has the Lord ever ignored anyone who prayed to him? 2:11 The Lord is kind and merciful; he forgives our sins and keeps us safe in time of trouble. 2:12 But those who lose their nerve are doomed—all those sinners who try to have it both ways! (GNT)

Ben Sira (2nd century BCE) was a Hellenistic Jewish scribe, sage, and allegorist from Jerusalem, the author of the book of Sirach, also known as the book of Ecclesiasticus. Ben Sira emphasizes divine mercy and God's willingness to forgive our sins. The rabbis of the first century and their successors pushed this message of grace, similar to John the Baptist and Yeshua. The Apostle Paul further wrote of the grace of

God to the gentile churches emphasizing the joy of knowing the God of Israel and His ways. This is why John wrote what he did in *John 1:16* “*out of his fullness we have all received grace in place of grace already given.*” (NIV) Note the author and Apostle John states that grace had already been given, which is alluding to the Torah and what we have been looking at here in this study. Note also how Grace and Repentance are central themes in the Apostolic Writings, similar to what we read Ben Sira saying in his book that the Lord God is ready to receive repentant sinners and even gives them a position of preference when they have devoted their hearts to repentance and to turning from their sins.

This is why the psalmist (David) writes as he does saying, ב אשׁוּׁ | כִּילָהּ | בְּדַרְךְ תָּמִים מְתִי תָבוֹא אֵלַי אֲתֵהִלֶּךָ בְּתָם-לִבְבִי בְּקָרֵב בֵּיתִי: ג לֹא-
 101:2 I will give heed to the blameless way. When will You come to me? I will walk within my house in the integrity of my heart. 101:3 I will set no worthless thing before my eyes; I hate the work of those who fall away; It shall not fasten its grip on me. (NASB) When he says that he will set no worthless thing before his eyes, what do you think he was referring to? Idols or prostitutes? In ancient times, what did David consider worthless things that would go before his eyes? What about pornography? What about movies that contain both pornographic materials and foul language? Is it possible for a believer to walk with integrity in heart before God while participating in these things all under the auspices of “*we are under grace now?*” Christians may not say this explicitly, but for those who do participate in these things and go to church on Sunday, this is the underlying principle as a result of the modern theologies of “*come as you are,*” which lacks the call to Teshuvah.

ד לִבְבִי עֵקֶשׁ יָסוּר מִמֶּנִּי, ה מְלֹשְׁנִי [מְלֹשְׁנִי] בְּסֹתֵר | רֵעֵהוּ אוֹתוֹ אֲצַמִּית גְּבוּהַ-עֵינָיִם
 101:4 A perverse heart shall depart from me; I will know no evil. 101:5 Whoever secretly slanders his neighbor, him I will destroy; No one who has a haughty look and an arrogant heart will I endure. (NASB) He speaks of the perverse heart, it seems clear what he is speaking of. *Mishley / Proverbs 11:20* states, *11:20 The perverse in heart are an abomination to the LORD, But the blameless in their*

walk are His delight. (NASB) It is interesting how the deceitfulness of the heart, in the sense of the perverse heart, what we look at, men today tend to make light of or give short weight or measure to the heart today. This I believe is also a consequence of modern theologies which promote a lack of reverence and respect for God's Word and the place of the commandment in our lives. I have been told recently that this kind of thinking is legalism. What do you think? Is reverence and respect for God's word a form of legalism? Certainly not! The heart is a secret place and hidden from the sight of men, however even the thoughts of the heart appear to be capable of violating the Torah commands of God, and so becoming an abomination to the Lord as we see according to the psalm. This is coupled to our actions, the things that we do which are motivated by the thoughts of our hearts. Thankfully, in the Messiah Yeshua, we are given the power of God through His spirit to overcome the deceitfulness of the heart and flesh, and are transformed on the inside and given the desire to walk according to the Spirit, and to live our lives for the Lord! Do you have this great desire in your heart as I do? If not, your thinking may have been influenced by modern theologies. Seek the Lord's help immediately, and being taking serious the study of God's Word and its application, because these have eternal consequences if you do not!

Next week we will look at "*Why should we study Torah,*" and "*What does it mean to Study our Bibles?*" The common approach today is to simply "*read*" the bible calling reading "*studying*" God's Word. Is this the correct approach to "*Study?*"

