

God's Mercy and Grace

Key Verses: “God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved).”

—*Ephesians 2:4,5*

***Selected Scripture:
Ephesians 2:1-10***

so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.” (Rom. 5:12) As a result, since Adam’s disobedience, Satan has been the “prince of this world,” and the “prince of the power of the air.”—John 12:31; Eph. 2:2

God’s great love and mercy, however, provided his only begotten Son, Jesus, as a ransom, or corresponding price, to redeem Adam and the entire human race. “For since by man [Adam] came death, by man [the perfect man Jesus] came also the resurrection of the dead.” (I Cor. 15:21) The Scriptures further explain that by God’s grace, Jesus “was made a little lower than the angels for the

PAUL BEGINS HIS LETTER to the Ephesian brethren by saying, “To the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus.” (Eph. 1:1) In chapter 2, he reminds them that, because of Adam’s disobedience, the whole world of mankind is considered as “dead in trespasses and sins, . . . children of disobedience.” (vss. 1,2) This includes the footstep followers of Jesus. In another epistle, Paul explains why this is, saying, “By one man [Adam] sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and

suffering of death, . . . that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.”—Heb. 2:9

The Scriptures differentiate between the hopes and promises of consecrated believers, the church, and those for the rest of mankind. Those having “an ear to hear” during the present Gospel Age, are being dealt with by God now, whereas the world’s hope is in the future earthly kingdom. (Matt. 6:10) At the present time, those who have heard, responded, and laid hold upon God’s grace, in Christ, are referred to individually as a “new creature.”—II Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15

In the Key Verses of our lesson, God’s mercy and grace toward these New Creatures is explained by Paul. He states that God’s mercy is so rich, and his grace so abundant, that he “loved us” even when we were “dead in sins,” and provided the means of our salvation through Christ. The Heavenly Father’s love toward these New Creatures includes the additional hope and privilege of becoming “joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him.”—Rom. 8:17

Paul also speaks of the fellowship and communion these New Creatures have with the Heavenly Father and with our Lord Jesus in this present life, saying that God has “raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.” (Eph. 2:6) These blessings have come to us, Paul continues, not because of our own worthiness—“By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.”—vss. 8,9

If we have made a full and acceptable consecration to God, as New Creatures, we are reckoned as having been raised up out of the state of sin and death to “heavenly places,” a new condition of life in Christ. Let all such, therefore, who are “risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.”—Col. 3:1,2