

GRACE

SEGREGATION

Deuteronomy 7:1-2 These nations rejected YAHWEH, hated His people, and embraced false gods. We have difficulty understanding why YAHWEH took such an unyielding stand against these people unless we acknowledge the spiritual warfare. Satan uses people to carry out his evil purposes which always defame YAHWEH and destroy humanity. People, who willfully submit to Satan, even if they do not realize it is Satan, become his weapons of destruction. Eve listened to the serpent, and Adam listened to Eve. She became an agent for his evil. Cain murdered Abel because his own works were evil, and his brother's were righteous.

John 8:44

You are of *your* father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

Time and again in the Old Testament, God judges and punishes people. We understand His actions are always right and just because YAHWEH is always right and just.

Deuteronomy 7:3 and 4 The prohibition of intermarriage was not absolute. The regulation for the marriage of an Israelite man to a foreign woman taken as a prize of war is given in Deuteronomy 21:10-14. However, Israel suffered greatly for not heeding this command. Solomon and Ahab among many others indicate how intermarriage adversely affected Israel. Ezra and Nehemiah strongly disparaged intermarriage between Israelites and non-Israelites.

2 Corinthians 6:14-18 We see how vital it is not to associate with unbelievers; yet, we must have some contact or we cannot witness. Extremes in this area are not good. The darkness in the unbeliever will ill effect the light in the believer. Israel's history is not to be ignored.

Romans 16:17 and 18 "...Keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances...."
The book of Jude informs us that there are those among us who are agents for the devil.

Matthew 18:15-17 We are to do everything we can to maintain unity.

Deuteronomy 7:5 We are to eliminate any spiritual influence that may cause us to stumble.

CHOSEN BY GRACE

Deuteronomy 7:6-9 They were separated from all other people in the world to YAHWEH. God selected them to be His own because He loved them and to keep the oath to their fathers. He did not call them because of what they had done or would do but because of grace.

Deuteronomy 14:2; 26:16-19 The calling has always been by grace and is a mutual arrangement in that man must respond to the call by obedience to God's commands. The calling

of God is not a forcing, manipulating, or coercion; rather, it is a loving invitation that must be responded to by a freewill choice. The called must respond, and God will even help us to respond the right way if we ask for His help.

Deuteronomy 28:1-14; Exodus 19:5 and 6; 1 Corinthians 6:19 and 20; Romans 8:29-ff; Ephesians 1:1-14

Deuteronomy 9:4-6 They did not inherit the land because of their own righteousness.

Romans 3:19-26 We are not saved because of our own righteousness.

Deuteronomy 7:10 Grace and judgment are not mutually exclusive.

FREE WILL AND GRACE

Deuteronomy 7:11-26 The blessing of God abounds to those who are called by His grace; yet, man still has the responsibility to respond with obedience. The great question in our time (which is called the administration of grace) is: *Have things changed?* Today, do we just receive the blessings of God regardless of behavior? Is it the administration of grace because everything pertaining to God is a free gift? Has the way that God deals with man changed?

Ephesians 2:1-13 Salvation is available to humanity by the accomplished work of Christ and not by man's works. Having this grace does not nullify the requirement to have faith and to have the corresponding works that always are connected. Salvation is a gift, but it is not forced upon people. We must accept salvation by operating our free will to make Jesus Lord in our lives.

The undeniable reality of God's dealings with man is that of free will. The original design of man was to be like God, which includes the ability to think, reason, and choose hence free will. God provided a perfect environment for man in Eden with the intent of eternal abundant life. Man had to accept it God's way. He had to want God just as God wanted him. The Garden of Eden was all about God's loving grace, and Paradise will be also, but grace never excludes man's freewill choice.

The devil wants to control people and uses people to control other people. Spouses control their mates. Parents try to control their children. Employers try to control their employees; friends, friends; countries, countries; and so on. The devil also has to operate within the boundaries of man's choice. Adam and Eve chose to disobey with the deceiving seduction of the adversary's words. Cain killed Abel because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous (1 John 3:12). Those influenced by the devil attack the righteous; that is the reality. It does not make sense, but it is what it is. Those influenced by the devil always try to control others. Two men whom we know were occupied by evil spirits were Saul and Judas, and both tried to control the righteous – David and Jesus. People who have evil spirits endeavor to control others (although not everyone who tries to control others is demon occupied). Controlling others is evil because it violates the laws of free will, laws that God always abides by. The man in the tomb and the boy who fell before Jesus are examples of how extreme the control can be.

“Some Christians are under the control of their minister. Christian leadership is often used, whether consciously or unconsciously, to control others. The more spiritual authority that is claimed by the minister the greater the temptation to make use of that power to control. Insecurity and the fear that usually accompanies it push people to seek control over situations and people, lest the insecure person find himself or herself unable to cope with what is going on. Combine insecurity with such things as pride, heady giftedness and the power of position, and the mix is lethal. Such a combination often leads to domination and manipulation by leaders who, because of their misuse of power, come under the strong influence of our enemy, Satan.”

Charles Kraft.

Once people **allow** a spirit in, their ability to behave properly greatly diminishes because they **surrender** personal choice to an evil and controlling spirit. Personal desire, reasoning, and discipline weaken and make freedom extremely difficult.

Man does not have the ability within himself to control or manage his life; yet, life must be controlled and managed. Therefore, we need help, which brings us to the first and foremost requirement for receiving God’s help – humility. “My life is out of control and unmanageable; God help me!” We must seek His help and act in harmony with His directing. Prayer alone will not suffice – we must take action.