

Grace In Genesis (ii)

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[0 : 01] 11 September 2001, terrorists took their twisted form of violent struggle to the shores of the United States, prompting a reaction which has changed the face of nations.

The image of a changed world will always be that of smoke billowing from the twin towers of New York's collapsing building. Everything changed that day. And our children are growing up in a very different world from the one we did.

But then 9-11 is just one date in a long list of other dates where the world has changed. It changed on the 1st of January 1983 when researchers began to assemble what we today call the internet. It changed on the 5th of May 1789 when the French Revolution began. It changed on the 14th of May 1948 when Israel declared its independence.

All these events continue to change our world. But there is one event which stands head and shoulders above them all.

[1 : 11] We don't know the precise date it took place. We don't even know where it took place. But on that day, everything changed. On that day, Eve reached forth her hand and ate a piece of fruit and then gave it to her husband.

And he ate also. As a result of this one act of disobedience, the whole world was cursed. And events set in motion which would result in the creator of the heavens and the earth dying on a cross.

Everything changed on that day when a God who had been betrayed said to his betrayers, What is this you have done? This was the worst of all days.

When for the first time mankind shook its fist at its creator and said, Leave us alone. We don't want you. We don't need you. This was the worst of all days when sin and death entered into the human experience.

It was a day of darkness and doom. A day of cataclysmic pain. And yet, even the blackest darkness in all human history, When mankind was at his very lowest, Was the day the grace of God won out.

[2 : 31] Genesis 3 and the account of mankind's fallen to sin and death, Makes painful reading. But it also builds the foundation for the triumph of the grace of God in the cross and resurrection of Jesus.

A direct line passes from Genesis 3 to the new heavens and the new earth, Which is a greater paradise than any Eden. And this line is called, The grace of God.

Well, in this second study of grace in Genesis, I want us to consider three elements of how the blackest darkness in all of human history Provided the backdrop to the radiant hope of Christian salvation.

Patience, promise, and provision. Patience, promise, and provision. In his Institutes, John Calvin talks of the created universe in Genesis 1 As being the theater of the glory of God.

And I want to argue that we should view the darkness of Genesis 3 As being the theater of the grace of God. First of all then, Patience, patience.

[3 : 48] Over the centuries, Christians have called the events of Genesis 3 The fall of man. Because everything on that day changed. The day Adam and Eve Obeyed Satan, The crafty serpent, And defied the God who made them And had loved them.

Having disobeyed God, They ran from him and they hid. They polluted the paradise of Eden With their defiance And they ruined their relationship with each other. They excused their actions.

They placed the blame on one another And on that serpent. The seeds of all this world's misery and sin Were sown that day. The constant chorus of Genesis 1 is Behold, it was very good.

Never again would that be said of God's creation. Because by their sinful actions, Mankind defaced it. And worse still, By our sin, Mankind dragged the image of God Into the mud.

In our society, Sin is no big deal. We relegate it, don't we, To the level of preference. But, As Christian writers have argued, Based on the teaching of the Bible, Sin exists in a category of its own.

[5 : 07] They call it, Deicide. Deicide. Literally, Killing God. Suicide is the killing of oneself. Homicide is the killing of another human being.

Deicide is the killing of God. Now perhaps we begin to understand How destructive sin is And how dreadfully dark it was On that day Adam and Eve fell. They acted to kill the God Who gave them life.

They committed Deicide. This is the worst of days When for the first time, Mankind shook its fist at God And said, Leave us alone.

We don't need you. We don't want you. We wish you were dead. How long it took mankind To fall from the perfection In which God had made them Into the degradation Of sin.

We may only speculate. Some theologians propose It was a matter of mere minutes. What we do know is that Within a relatively short time Of mankind being created And given life by a loving God He fell into sinful defiance against him And our actions brought a curse upon this world So that never again Could it be said of this creation Behold, it was good.

[6 : 32] The grace of God in Genesis 3 Consists first of all in this God did not destroy us And he did not destroy his world He did not uncreate All that he had created And returned it to the nothingness From which it came The victim of an abortive effort God does not punish us As we deserve to be punished But rather demonstrates His limitless patience With respect to Genesis 1 We may ask the question As we did last week Why is there something Rather than nothing To which we answer In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth With respect to Genesis 3 We may ask the same question Why is there something Rather than nothing To which we answer In the words of 2 Peter 3 verse 15 Bear in mind That our Lord's patience

Means salvation Salvation Most people in our society Think that God The God of the Old Testament Is a God of wrath and anger Whereas the God of the New Testament Is one of love and patience Well such people However well qualified Have failed to think Through Genesis 3 And God's response To mankind's fall As that of limitless patience Born out of a burning desire For the salvation of his people Again in 2 Peter 3 verse 9 We read of God's patience The Lord is not slow In keeping his promise As some understand slowness Peter writes He is patient with you Not wanting anyone to perish But everyone to come to repentance So from For all the darkness of Genesis 3 With its world changing cataclysm We have here a demonstration Of the brightness of God's glorious patience

That Genesis 3 is not the end of the Bible It is not the end of his dealings With a sinful humanity Who have betrayed him It is only the beginning Of the exhibition of his grace It's only the end of the first act Which began with creation But ends with his gracious patience Which means salvation for us He continues to demonstrate His gracious patience today We look at the world around us With all its brokenness And its pain And its violence So we wonder to ourselves Why doesn't God put an end to it all Here and now It's because In his patience He wants no one to perish But all to come to repentance And we look inside At our hearts And our own unfaithfulness Uncertainty and doubt And we wonder to ourselves Why does God bother with me?

It's his patience The Lord's patience means our salvation And according to the Apostle Paul In Philippians 1 verse 6 He who began a good work in you Will carry it on to completion The world may have changed On 9-11 But God's gracious patience With his world never did And for that we praise And worship him For his grace Patience Second way in which we see God's grace working In Genesis 3 Promise Promise Undoubtedly The lowest point of Genesis 3 Is in verse 6 When the woman saw That the fruit of the tree Was good for food And pleasing to the eye And also desirable For gaining wisdom She took it And ate it She also gave some To her husband Who was with her And he ate it Humanity never Stooped lower than this Undoubtedly

The highest point Of Genesis 3 Is found in verse 15 Where God says To the serpent Satan I will put enmity Or hatred Maybe that's not quite The word I'll put enmity Between you and the woman And between your offspring And hers He will crush your head And you will strike his heel Over the centuries Christian teachers Have called this text The Proto-Evangelium Literally The first gospel Because in many ways Genesis 3 15 Is the summary Of the whole Bible And the history Of our world From 1995 To 2005 The American cyclist Lance Armstrong Won the Tour de France He was well on the way Of becoming One of the greatest Athletes in history And certainly The greatest

Cyclist of all time He was the face Of Livestrong Marketing companies Were falling over Themselves To pay him

[11 : 40] Millions of pounds To promote Their products Lance Armstrong The pinnacle Of performance sports But it all changed In 2012 When an investigation Showed That he had been Using performance Enhancing drugs All the time Armstrong Armstrong was stripped Of his titles And given a lifetime ban We call such a scandal A fall from grace Genesis 3 Has often been called By Christian theologians The fall of man Without wishing In any way To debate Historic And biblical terminology Of the fall Nor wishing to Minimize The world Changing Historical events Recorded in this chapter May I humbly suggest That in the light Of the promise Of verse 15 Genesis 3 Would be Equally described Not merely As mankind's Fall from grace But more mankind's

Fall into grace By our defiance Of God It was as if We pushed him away And in so doing We fell over A cliff Into the abyss Of destruction Only to be Snatched up On our way Down by the hands Of God's gracious Promise In verse 15 The proto-evangelium The first gospel In this way Genesis 3 Records not only Our fall From grace But even more Our fall Into grace The promise As you see Describes The ultimate Defeat Of the serpent Satan Through whom Sin entered Into the world God vows That an offspring Of the woman Will crush The serpent's Head The descendant Of Eve Will triumph Over Satan And of course We know This is a reference To the cross Of Jesus That cross Which represented The striking Of Eve Descendant

On the heel But the crushing Of Satan's Head In other words Sin will not Have the last word Death will not Be ultimate Because the word Became flesh And dwelt among us And that word Gave himself To take away All our sins And transform Our fall From grace Into a fall Into grace As far as Adam and Eve Were concerned The promise Lies far In the future And yet As far as We are concerned It has been Fulfilled in the past When Jesus The son of God The son of Eve Triumphed over Satan on the cross Nowhere In the new Testament Is the death Of Jesus Presented As a defeat It's always Presented As a victory For example In first Corinthians In Colossians Rather 2.15 The apostle Paul Proclaims Having Having disarmed

The powers And authorities He made A public Spectacle Of them Triumphant Over them By his cross The cross Is the weapon Of God's victory The fulfillment Of his promise That the offspring Of Eve Would crush The head Of Satan The darkness Will not be Final God says Sin will not Have the last Say Satan will Not win The curse Imposed upon The good world God created Shall be Reversed And humankind Having condemned Itself To death By its Disobedience Will live Eternally The light Shall overcome The darkness Death Shall be Swallowed Up in life Guilt Shall be Swallowed By forgiveness And deicide By the death Of death In the death Of Christ And our Question is This What did Adam and Eve Do to deserve Such a Gracious Promise Grace Why can we

Talk about Genesis 3 Being not so Much a fall From grace As a fall Into grace Well the answer Rests in the Passage itself And with that First question We asked Precisely What did Adam and Eve Do to deserve Such a Gracious Promise Having been Lovingly Created by God And placed Together As the Ideal couple In the Garden Having been Provided with Every kind Of fruit Pleasing to The eye And good For food And having Been blessed With every Kind of Intimacy Between each Other And with God They consciously Shook their Fists at God and Said we Don't need You We don't Want you We wish You were Dead Leave us Alone God and God and God and God and God and God and Eve Did everything In their Power to Defy God's Grace God and They They Didn't They Didn't deserve The grace As promise Of God Any more

[16 : 45] Than a Convicted Murderer Deserves To be Rewarded They Deserve To be Punished With Curse Not to Be blessed With Promise But that In the Grace of God is Precisely What Happened In his Judgment Of Satan And his Announcement Of the Proto Evangelium The first Gospel God Blessed This Sinful Human Race With The Promise Of a Deliverer A Redeemer A Saviour Little Did Adam And Eve Guess Little I wonder Did Satan Even Guess That This Redeemer Would be The very God Against Whom They Had Sinned They Never Dreamed That God Himself Would Take The Flesh Of Eve And Come To Do Battle With Satan His Only Weapon A Roman Cross That Promise Made Here In Genesis 3 Is Ultimately The Promise Of The Coming Of God Himself Jesus

Christ Made Incarnate In The Womb Of The Virgin Mary Daughter of Eve That's Why We Talk About Genesis 3 Not So Much Being A fall From Grace As Much As A fall Into Grace Because As Paul Will Later Say In Romans 5 Verse 20 Where Sin Increased Grace Grace Grace Increased All

The More Genesis 3 15 No Less Than John 3 16 Is Telling Us That God So Loved The World That He Gave Us His Son So That Whoever May Believe In Him Should Not Perish But Have Everlasting Life Genesis 3 15 No Less Than John 3 16 Is Calling Us To Put Our Faith And Trust In God And His Grace Is Promise To Us Seared Into My Memory I'll Never Forget It And So I'll Say It Again When I Was Growing Up There Was A Man Called Eric Mackay In The Small Highland Village Of Rogart And It's Tiny Rogart Blink And You Miss It Eric Mackay Was A Toothless Man And He Wore A Hairnet And He Ate Soap To Keep His Breath From Smelling He Was What We Used To Call Simple And Eric Was Small Enough To Pass For A Dwarf Strange Looking Man His English Vocabulary Was Limited To Barely A Few Hundred Words At The Prayer Meeting He Would Say The Same Things Every Week In His Prayer But One Of These Things Was Priceless In His Broad Sutherland Brogue He Never Been Out Of Sutherland He Would Pray Lord Help Us To Stick With The Winners Lord Help Us To Stick With The Winners What is Genesis 3 Verse 15 But God's Gracious Invitation To A Fallen Human Race To Stick To There's Promise Patience Promise And Thirdly Provision Provision Well this Chapter is Full of Truth That we Need To Know If We Want To Understand The Story Of The Bible And Understand The History Of Our World As we Close I want Us To Notice A Small Detail Of Genesis 3 But One Which Fills Our Hearts With Gratitude For The Cross Of Christ In Verse 10 A Terrified Adam When Asked By God Where He Is Answers I Heard You In The Garden And I Was Afraid Because I Was Naked So I Hid Adam Shame You See Is Reflected In His Awareness Of His Nakedness Before His Wife And Before God In Verse 21 We Read That Even Though Adam And Eve Had Rebelled Against God The Lord God Made Garments Of Skin For Adam And His Wife And Clothed Them In Other Words The First Death Recorded In Scripture Is Not That Of Abel At The Hands Of Cain In Genesis 4 It Is Of An Animal Whose Skin God Used To Cover The Nakedness Of A Sinful Human Race That Animal Its Death Was To Be The First Of A Million Each One Dying To Cover The Nakedness Of A Sinful Mankind Before God The Hebrew Word Kippur Yom Kippur Means To Cover And That Is The Idea And Concept Of The Old Testament Used To Describe Atonement [21 : 49] Adam And Eve Are Being Taught That The Punishment For Sin Is Death But That God In His Grace Destines Another To Die In Our Place That The Blood And Death Of Another Will Cover Our Sin And Make Atonement For Us Back In Genesis Chapter 3 And Verse 7 We Learn That Having Eten From The Fruit The Eyes Of Both Of Them Were Opened And They Realized That They Were Naked So They Sewed Fig Leaves Together And Made Coverings For Themselves These Coverings Made Of Fig Leaves They Are Pathetically Ineffective But The Covering God Made For Them From The Skin Human Attempts At Atoning For Sin Fail Atonement For Sin Will Only Be Made Through The Sacrifice Of Another That's What Genesis 3 Is Teaching Us Here Then Once Again We See Genesis 3

Describing Not So Much Humanities Fall From Grace As Much As Humanities Fall Into Grace Because Not Only Does It Prophesy The Coming Of A Savior It Specifies The Means By Which He Will Save Us From Our Sins Namely His Death His Life Blood Shall Be The Coveting For Our Sin He Shall Make Atonement For Us Through His Own Sacrificial Death Even As The Death Of An Animal Covered The Shameful Nakedness Of Adam And Eve So The Death Of God's Son Will Cover The Shameful Heart Nakedness Of Millions And Billions Of Sinful People You know As we Go Through The Old Testament We Discover That Animals Beyond Counting Are Sacrificed To Take The Sins Of The People Away But All Of Them Point To This One Ultimate Sacrifice God's Own Son Born

Of A Daughter Of Eve He Will Die And His Blood Will Cover Our Sin God Provided A Covering For Adam And Eve Little Did They Know That Their Ultimate Covering Was To Be The Blood Of God Himself And That's Why I Can Say That This Seemingly Small Insignificant Detail In Genesis 3 Fills Us With Gratitude For The Cross Of Christ For It's There All The Prophecies Of Genesis 3 Find Their Fulfillment As God's Son Both Dies To Take Away Our Sin And To Crush The Serpent's Head Humanity Shook Its Fist At God And Said Leave Us Alone We Don't Need You We Don't Want You We Wish You Were Dead Little Did Adam And Eve Know That That God God They Were Shaking Their Fist At Would In His Patient Time Die On A Cross To Give Them Not Just Life Not Just What They Had In Paradise Of Eden But Eternal Life A Greater Life Again Yes It's Deicide The Killing Of God But Not As We Might Have Imagined It's God Giving His Own Son For Us For Sure That World Changed From The Day Adam And Eve Reached For Their Hands And Ate From The Forbidden Fruit And Sinned Against God But It Wasn't So Much A Fall From Grace As Much As It

Was A Fall Into Grace Genesis 3 Describes God's First Great Act In The Theater Of His Grace It Is To Point To Jesus Christ And His Cross Revelation 22 At The Very End Of The Bible Will Describe God's Final Great Act In The Theater Of Grace And It Will Also Point To Jesus The Bible Is Bracketed By Jesus It's All About Him And It's All About His Grace

So Let Me Challenge Us All With This Final Question Where Are You In The Theater Of God's Grace Today Will You By Faith Listen To That Simple Toothless Man Who Ate Soap And What A Hair Net And Stick With The Winners Will You Praise God For His Patience And By Faith Be Covered With The Provision God Made In The Death Of His Son On The Cross The World Changed On The Day Adam And Eve Reached For Their Hands And Fell From The Grace Of God It Also Changed On The Day They Reached For Their Hands And Fell Into The Grace Of God Shall By Faith Your World Change Today As You Commit Yourself Into The Grace Of God Let us Pray In [26 : 53] Our Historical Arrogance O Lord We Tend To Think That Those Who Lived Before Us Were Primitive Compared To Us That Their Understanding Was So Much Lesser Than Ours And Their Intelligence So Much More Limited Than Ours And Yet We See Here Even In Genesis 3 An Understanding Which Is Far More Profound Than Much Of What We See In Our Own Society Today Of How Everything We See Around Us All The Misery And All The Pain And All The Sin It's All Come From This Place In Genesis 3 And Our Sinful Defiance Of You And yet And yet Rather than Being overwhelmed With With You You You Overcame It With The Light Of Your Promise That A Son Of Eve Would Crush The Head Of The Serpent Even While His Own Heel Was Being Struck And

By The Death Of Your Son Jesus Christ On The Cross You Have Provided Atonement For Our Sin Ushering Us In To A Greater Paradise Than Eden Ever Was Where You Yourself Shall Be Our Living Shepherd And You Shall Wipe Every Tear From Our Eye So Lord As We Go From This Place We Ask That Not One Of Us Would Remain Unchanged But That All Of Us From The Youngest To Oldest Would Say I Want To Fall Into The Grace Of The Arms Of Christ We Ask These Things In Jesus Name Amen At Moment We Are Extending Our Range Of Hymns And One Of The Standards Of The Hymns We Want To Sing Is That They Are Theologically Confessional That They Match Up To The The The The The The The The The One Of Your Mercy Does Exactly That When It Talks About A Covenant Of Grace

Genesis Chapter 3 Verse 15 Really Is A Covenant Of Grace Now Many Of You Won't Know This Of Course Some Of You Might Have Looked At This On YouTube But Heidi And Ellen Played It During The Collection So If You Don't Know It Don't Be Embarrassed That It Won't Be Sung Very Loud In Our Connegation This Evening Just Listen To The Words They Are Filled With Praise And Wonder The Wonder Of Your Mercy Lord The Beauty Of Your Grace To Ret photographer New Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you.

[31 : 33] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Now may grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, one true and living God, rest and remain with each one of you, now and always. Amen.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.